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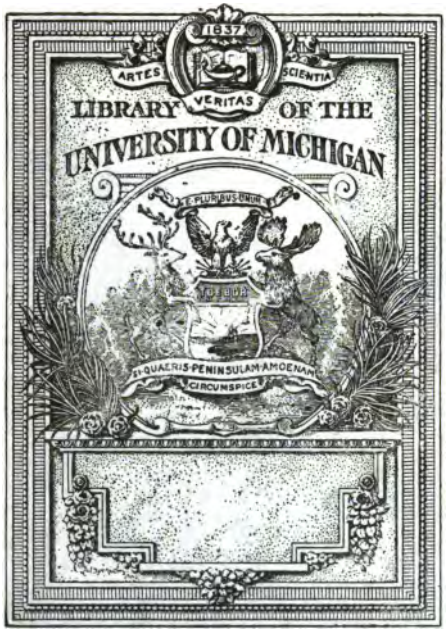
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# P O E M S,

by

William Cowper

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Vol.II.

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A new edition.

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London,
Printed for J.Johnson
1800.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE hiſtory of the following production is briefly this:—A lady, fond of blank verſe, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the SOFA for a ſubject. He obeyed; and, having much leiſure, connected another ſubject with it; and, purſuing the train of thought to which his ſituation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, inſtead of the trifle which he at firſt intended, a ſerious affair—a Volume!

In the Poem on the ſubject of Education, he would be very ſorry to ſtand ſuſpected of having aimed his cenſure at any particular ſchool. His objections are ſuch as naturally apply themſelves to ſchools in general. If there were not, as for the moſt part there is, wilful neglect in thoſe who manage them, and an omiſſion even of ſuch diſcipline as they are ſuſceptible of, the objects are yet



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too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thouſand parents, mourning under the bittereſt of all diſappointments, atteſt the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the miſchief at large, and not with any particular inſtance of it.

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## ERRATA.

Page 4, line 2, *for* umber, *read* lumber.
—— 295, — 4, *for* Mrs. *read* Lady.

# THE TASK,

## A POEM.

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## BOOK I.

## ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

*Hiſtorical deduction of ſeats, from the ſtool to the Sofa. —A School-boy's ramble.—A walk in the country. —The ſcene deſcribed.—Rural ſounds as well as ſights delightful.—Another walk.—Miſtake concerning the charms of ſolitude corrected.—Colonnades commended.—Alcove, and the view from it. —The wilderneſs.—The grove.—The threſher.— The neceſſity and the benefits of exerciſe.—The works of nature ſuperior to, and in ſome inſtances inimitable by, art.—The weariſomeneſs of what is commonly called a life of pleaſure.—Change of ſcene ſometimes expedient.—A common deſcribed, and the character of crazy Kate introduced.—Gipſies.— The bleſſings of civilized life.—That ſtate moſt favourable to virtue.—The South Sea iſlanders compaſſionated, but chiefly Omai.—His preſent ſtate of mind ſuppoſed.—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities.—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praiſe, but cenſured. —Fete champetre.—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of diſſipation and effeminacy upon our public meaſures.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK I.

## THE SOFA.

I SING the SOFA. I, who lately ſang
Truth, Hope, and Charity*, and touch'd with awe
The ſolemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Eſcap'd with pain from that advent'rous flight,
Now ſeek repoſe upon an humbler theme;
The theme though humble, yet auguſt and proud
Th' occaſion—for the Fair commands the ſong.

Time was, when clothing ſumptuous or for uſe,
Save their own painted ſkins, our ſires had none.
As yet black breeches were not; ſatin ſmooth,

* See Poems, vol. i.

Or velvet ſoft, or pluſh with ſhaggy pile:
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
Waſh'd by the ſea, or on the grav'ly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearleſs of wrong, repos'd his weary ſtrength.
Thoſe barb'rous ages paſt, ſucceeded next
The birth-day of invention; weak at firſt,
Dull in deſign, and clumſy to perform.
Joint-ſtools were then created; on three legs
Upborn they ſtood. Three legs upholding firm
A maſſy ſlab, in faſhion ſquare or round.
On ſuch a ſtool immortal Alfred ſat,
And ſway'd the ſceptre of his infant realms:
And ſuch in ancient halls and manſions drear
May ſtill be ſeen; but perforated ſore,
And drill'd in holes, the ſolid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.

At length a generation more refin'd
Improv'd the ſimple plan; made three legs four,
Gave them a twiſted form vermicular,
And o'er the ſeat, with plenteous wadding ſtuff'd,
Induc'd a ſplendid cover, green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tap'ſtry richly wrought

And woven cloſe, or needle-work ſublime.
There might ye ſee the piony ſpread wide,
The full-blown roſe, the ſhepherd and his laſs,
Lap-dog and lambkin with black ſtaring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India, ſmooth and bright
With Nature's varniſh; ſever'd into ſtripes
That interlac'd each other, theſe ſupplied
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that brac'd
The new machine, and it became a chair.
But reſtleſs was the chair; the back erect
Diſtreſs'd the weary loins, that felt no eaſe;
The ſlipp'ry ſeat betray'd the ſliding part
That preſs'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain to find the diſtant floor.
Theſe for the rich: the reſt, whom fate had plac'd
In modeſt mediocrity, content
With baſe materials, ſat on well-tann'd hides,
Obdurate and unyielding, glaſſy ſmooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimſon yarn,
Or ſcarlet crewel, in the cuſhion fixt;
If cuſhion might be call'd, what harder ſeem'd
Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.

No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
In Albion's happy iſle. The umber ſtood
Pond'rous and fixt by its own maſſy weight.
But elbows ſtill were wanting; theſe, ſome ſay,
An alderman of Cripplegate contriv'd:
And ſome aſcribe th' invention to a prieſt
Burly and big, and ſtudious of his eaſe.
But, rude at firſt, and not with eaſy ſlope
Receding wide, they preſs'd againſt the ribs,
And bruis'd the ſide; and, elevated high,
Taught the rais'd ſhoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elaps'd or e'er our rugged ſires
Complain'd, though incommodiouſly pent in,
And ill at eaſe behind. The ladies firſt
'Gan murmur, as became the ſofter ſex.
Ingenious fancy, never better pleas'd
Than when employ'd t' accommodate the fair,
Heard the ſweet moan with pity, and devis'd
The ſoft ſettee; one elbow at each end,
And in the midſt an elbow it receiv'd,
United yet divided, twain at once.
So ſit two kings of Brentford on one throne;
And ſo two citizens who take the air,
Cloſe pack'd, and ſmiling, in a chaiſe and one.

But relaxation of the languid frame,
By ſoft recumbency of outſtretch'd limbs,
Was bliſs reſerv'd for happier days. So ſlow
The growth of what is excellent; ſo hard
T' attain perfection in this nether world.
Thus firſt neceſſity invented ſtools,
Convenience next ſuggeſted elbow-chairs,
And luxury th' accompliſh'd SOFA laſt.

The nurſe ſleeps ſweetly, hir'd to watch the ſick,
Whom ſnoring ſhe diſturbs. As ſweetly he
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour
To ſleep within the carriage more ſecure,
His legs depending at the open door.
Sweet ſleep enjoys the curate in his deſk,
The tedious rector drawling o'er his head;
And ſweet the clerk below. But neither ſleep
Of lazy nurſe, who ſnores the ſick man dead,
Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
To ſlumber in the carriage more ſecure,
Nor ſleep enjoy'd by curate in his deſk,
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are ſweet,
Compar'd with the repoſe the SOFA yields.

Oh may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltleſs of pamper'd appetite obſcene)
From pangs arthritic, that infeſt the toe
Of libertine exceſs. The SOFA ſuits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:
For I have lov'd the rural walk through lanes
Of graſſy ſwarth, cloſe cropt by nibbling ſheep,
And ſkirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have lov'd the rural walk
O'er hills, through vallies, and by rivers' brink,
E'er ſince a truant boy I paſs'd my bounds
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;
And ſtill remember, nor without regret
Of hours that ſorrow ſince has much endear'd,
How oft, my ſlice of pocket ſtore conſum'd,
Still hung'ring, pennyleſs and far from home,
I fed on ſcarlet hips and ſtony haws,
Or bluſhing crabs, or berries, that imboſs
The bramble, black as jet, or ſloes auſtere.
Hard fare! but ſuch as boyiſh appetite
Diſdains not; nor the palate, undeprav'd
By culinary arts, unſav'ry deems.
No SOFA then awaited my return;

Nor SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs
His waſted ſpirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring ſhort fatigue; and, though our years
As life declines ſpeed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep;
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they ſpare;
Th' elaſtic ſpring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the ſtyle with eaſe, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Reſpiring freely the freſh air, that makes
Swift pace or ſteep aſcent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd
My reliſh of fair proſpect; ſcenes that ſooth'd
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still ſoothing, and of pow'r to charm me ſtill.
And witneſs, dear companion of my walks,
Whoſe arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Faſt lock'd in mine, with pleaſure ſuch as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inſpire—
Witneſs a joy that thou haſt doubled long.
Thou know'ſt my praiſe of nature moſt ſincere,

And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
To ſerve occaſions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has ſlacken'd to a pauſe, and we have born
The ruffling wind, ſcarce conſcious that it blew,
While admiration, feeding at the eye,
And ſtill unſated, dwelt upon the ſcene.
Thence with what pleaſure have we juſt diſcern'd
The diſtant plough ſlow moving, and beſide
His lab'ring team, that ſwerv'd not from the track,
The ſturdy ſwain diminiſh'd to a boy!
Here Ouſe, ſlow winding through a level plain
Of ſpacious meads with cattle ſprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his ſinuous courſe
Delighted. There, faſt rooted in their bank,
Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms,
That ſcreen the herdſman's ſolitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the ſtream
That, as with molten glaſs, inlays the vale,
The ſloping land recedes into the clouds;
Diſplaying on its varied ſide the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberleſs, ſquare tow'r,
Tall ſpire, from which the ſound of cheerful bells

Juſt undulates upon the liſt'ning ear,
Groves, heaths, and ſmoking villages, remote.
Scenes muſt be beautiful, which, daily view'd,
Pleaſe daily, and whoſe novelty ſurvives
Long knowledge and the ſcrutiny of years.
Praiſe juſtly due to thoſe that I deſcribe.

Nor rural ſights alone, but rural ſounds,
Exhilarate the ſpirit, and reſtore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
That ſweep the ſkirt of ſome far-ſpreading wood
Of ancient growth, make muſic not unlike
The daſh of ocean on his winding ſhore,
And lull the ſpirit while they fill the mind.
Unnumber'd branches waving in the blaſt,
And all their leaves faſt flutt'ring, all at once.
Nor leſs compoſure waits upon the roar
Of diſtant floods, or on the ſofter voice
Of neighb'ring fountain, or of rills that ſlip
Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
Upon looſe pebbles, loſe themſelves at length
In matted graſs, that with a livelier green
Betrays the ſecret of their ſilent courſe.
Nature inanimate employs ſweet ſounds,

But animated nature ſweeter ſtill,
To ſooth and ſatisfy the human ear.
Ten thouſand warblers cheer the day, and one
The live-long night: nor theſe alone, whoſe notes
Nice finger'd art muſt emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that ſwim ſublime
In ſtill repeated circles, ſcreaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and ev'n the boding owl
That hails the riſing moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themſelves and harſh,
Yet heard in ſcenes where peace for ever reigns,
And only there, pleaſe highly for their ſake.

Peace to the artiſt, whoſe ingenious thought
Deviſ'd the weather-houſe, that uſeful toy!
Fearleſs of humid air and gathering rains,
Forth ſteps the man—an emblem of myſelf!
More delicate, his tim'rous mate retires.
When Winter ſoaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to ſtruggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are beſt at home,
The taſk of new diſcov'ries falls on me.
At ſuch a ſeaſon, and with ſuch a charge,
Once went I forth; and found, till then unknown,

A cottage, whither oft we ſince repair:
'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but cloſe
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itſelf unſeen
Peeps at the vale below; ſo thick beſet
With foliage of ſuch dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peaſant's neſt.*
And, hidden as it is, and far remote
From ſuch unpleaſing ſounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Inceſſant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clam'rous whether pleas'd or pain'd,
Oft have I wiſh'd the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have ſaid, at leaſt I ſhould poſſeſs
The poet's treaſure, ſilence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and ſecure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that ſtill retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated ſcite forbids the wretch
To drink ſweet waters of the cryſtal well;
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And, heavy-laden, brings his bev'rage home,
Far fetch'd and little worth; nor ſeldom waits,
Dependant on the baker's punctual call,

To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Hungry and ſad, and his laſt cruſt conſum'd.
So farewell envy of the *peaſant's neſt!*
If ſolitude make ſcant the means of life,
Society for me!—thou ſeeming ſweet,
Be ſtill a pleaſing object in my view;
My viſit ſtill, but never mine abode.

Not diſtant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us. Monument of ancient taſte,
Now ſcorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a ſcreen
From ſultry ſuns; and, in their ſhaded walks
And long protracted bow'rs, enjoy'd at noon
The gloom and coolneſs of declining day.
We bear our ſhades about us; ſelf-depriv'd
Of other ſcreen, the thin umbrella ſpread,
And range an Indian waſte without a tree.
Thanks to Benevolus*—he ſpares me yet
Theſe cheſnuts rang'd in correſponding lines;
And, though himſelf ſo poliſh'd, ſtill reprieves
The obſolete prolixity of ſhade.

* John Courtney Throckmorton, Eſq. of Weſton Underwood.

Deſcending now (but cautious, left too faſt)
A ſudden ſteep, upon a ruſtic bridge
We paſs a gulph, in which the willows dip
Their pendent boughs, ſtooping as if to drink.
Hence, ancle-deep in moſs and flow'ry thyme,
We mount again, and feel at ev'ry ſtep
Our foot half ſunk in hillocks green and ſoft,
Rais'd by the mole, the miner of the ſoil.
He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures earth; and, plotting in the dark,
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the miſchiefs he has done.

The ſummit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride ſecures
The grand retreat from injuries impreſs'd
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The pannels, leaving an obſcure, rude name,
In characters uncouth, and ſpelt amiſs.
So ſtrong the zeal t' immortalize himſelf
Beats in the breaſt of man, that ev'n a few
Few tranſient years, won from th' abyſs abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion, ſeem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye;

And, poſted on this ſpeculative height,
Exults in its command. The ſheep-fold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At firſt, progreſſive as a ſtream, they ſeek
The middle field; but, ſcatter'd by degrees,
Each to his choice, ſoon whiten all the land.
There, from the ſun-burnt hay-field, homeward creeps
The loaded wain; while, lighten'd of its charge,
The wain that meets it paſſes ſwiftly by;
The booriſh driver leaning o'er his team
Vocif'rous, and impatient of delay.
Nor leſs attractive is the woodland ſcene,
Diverſified with trees of ev'ry growth,
Alike, yet various. Here the gray ſmooth trunks
Of aſh, or lime, or beech, diſtinctly ſhine,
Within the twilight of their diſtant ſhades;
There, loft behind a riſing ground, the wood
Seems ſunk, and ſhorten'd to its topmoſt boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler ſome,
And of a wanniſh grey; the willow ſuch,
And poplar, that with ſilver lines his leaf,
And aſh far-ſtretching his umbrageous arm;

Of deeper green the elm; and deeper ſtill,
Lord of the woods, the long-ſurviving oak.
Some gloſſy-leav'd, and ſhining in the ſun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffuſing odours: nor unnoted paſs
The ſycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet
Have chang'd the woods, in ſcarlet honours bright.
O'er theſe, but far beyond (a ſpacious map
Of hill and valley interpos'd between),
The Ouſe, dividing the well-water'd land,
Now glitters in the ſun, and now retires,
As baſhful, yet impatient to be ſeen.

Hence the declivity is ſharp and ſhort,
And ſuch the re-aſcent; between them weeps
A little naiad her impov'riſh'd urn
All ſummer long, which winter fills again.
The folded gates would bar my progreſs now,
But that the * lord of this enclos'd demeſne,
Communicative of the good he owns,

* See the foregoing note.

Admits me to a ſhare; the guiltleſs eye
Commits no wrong, nor waſtes what it enjoys.
Refreſhing change! where now the blazing ſun?
By ſhort tranſition we have loſt his glare,
And ſtepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race ſurvives.
How airy and how light the graceful arch,
Yet awful as the conſecrated roof
Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath
The chequer'd earth ſeems reſtleſs as a flood
Bruſh'd by the wind. So ſportive is the light
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
Shadow and ſunſhine intermingling quick,
And dark'ning and enlight'ning, as the leaves
Play wanton, ev'ry moment, ev'ry ſpot.

And now, with nerves new-brac'd and ſpirits cheer'd,
We tread the wilderneſs, whoſe well-roll'd walks,
With curvature of flow and eaſy ſweep—
Deception innocent—give ample ſpace
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;

Between the upright ſhafts of whoſe tall elms
We may diſcern the threſher at his taſk.
Thump after thump reſounds the conſtant flail,
That ſeems to ſwing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the deſtin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff.
The ruſtling ſtraw ſends up a frequent miſt
Of atoms, ſparkling in the noon-day beam.
Come hither, ye that preſs your beds of down,
And ſleep not: ſee him ſweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curſe,
But ſoften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaſeleſs action all that is ſubſiſts.
Conſtant rotation of th' unwearied wheel
That nature rides upon maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An inſtant's pauſe, and lives but while ſhe moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for uſe,
Elſe noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and ſtreams,
All feel the freſh'ning impulſe, and are cleans'd
By reſtleſs undulation: ev'n the oak

Thrives by the rude concuſſion of the ſtorm:
He ſeems indeed indignant, and to feel
Th' impreſſion of the blaſt with proud diſdain,
Frowning, as if in his unconſcious arm
He held the thunder: but the monarch owes
His firm ſtability to what he ſcorns—
More fixt below, the more diſturb'd above.
The law, by which all creatures elſe are bound,
Binds man the lord of all. Himſelf derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cauſe,
From ſtrenuous toil his hours of ſweeteſt eaſe.
The ſedentary ſtretch their lazy length
When cuſtom bids, but no refreſhment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deſerted of its bloom, the flaccid, ſhrunk,
And wither'd muſcle, and the vapid ſoul,
Reproach their owner with that love of reſt
To which he forfeits ev'n the reſt he loves.
Not ſuch th' alert and active. Meaſure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And their's alone ſeems worthy of the name.
Good health, and, its aſſociate in moſt,
Good temper; ſpirits prompt to undertake,
And not ſoon ſpent, though in an arduous taſk;

The pow'rs of fancy and ſtrong thought are their's;
Ev'n age itſelf ſeems privileg'd in them,
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A ſparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The vet'ran ſhows, and, gracing a gray beard
With youthful ſmiles, deſcends toward the grave
Sprightly, and old almoſt without decay.

Like a coy maiden, eaſe, when courted moſt,
Fartheſt retires—an idol, at whoſe ſhrine
Who oft'neſt ſacrifice are favour'd leaſt.
The love of Nature, and the ſcenes ſhe draws,
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there ſhould be found,
Who, ſelf-impriſon'd in their proud ſaloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unſcented fictions of the loom;
Who, ſatisfied with only pencil'd ſcenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
Th' inferior wonders of an artiſt's hand!
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art;
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire—
None more admires—the painter's magic ſkill
Who ſhows me that which I ſhall never ſee,
Conveys a diſtant country into mine,

And throws Italian light on Engliſh walls:
But imitative ſtrokes can do no more
Than pleaſe the eye—ſweet Nature ev'ry ſenſe.
The air ſalubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And muſic of her woods—no works of man
May rival theſe; theſe all beſpeak a pow'r
Peculiar, and excluſively her own.
Beneath the open ſky ſhe ſpreads the feaſt;
'Tis free to all—'tis ev'ry day renew'd;
Who ſcorns it ſtarves deſervedly at home.
He does not ſcorn it, who, impriſon'd long
In ſome unwholeſome dungeon, and a prey
To ſallow ſickneſs, which the vapours, dank
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
Eſcapes at laſt to liberty and light:
His cheek recovers ſoon its healthful hue;
His eye relumines its extinguiſh'd fires;
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the ſweets of ev'ry breeze.
He does not ſcorn it, who has long endur'd
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflam'd
With acrid ſalts; his very heart athirſt

To gaze at Nature in her green array,
Upon the ſhip's tall ſide he ſtands, poſſeſs'd
With viſions prompted by intenſe deſire:
Fair fields appear below, ſuch as he left
Far diſtant, ſuch as he would die to find—
He ſeeks them headlong, and is ſeen no more.

The ſpleen is ſeldom felt where Flora reigns;
The low'ring eye, the petulance, the frown,
And ſullen ſadneſs, that o'erſhade, diſtort,
And mar the face of beauty, when no cauſe
For ſuch immeaſurable woe appears,
Theſe Flora baniſhes, and gives the fair
Sweet ſmiles, and bloom leſs tranſient than her own.
It is the conſtant revolution, ſtale
And taſteleſs, of the ſame repeated joys,
That palls and ſatiates, and makes languid life
A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health ſuffers, and the ſpirits ebb; the heart
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feaſt
Is famiſh'd—finds no muſic in the ſong,
No ſmartneſs in the jeſt; and wonders why.
Yet thouſands ſtill deſire to journey on,
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.

The paralytic, who can hold her cards,
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and ſhuffle, to divide and ſort,
Her mingled ſuits and ſequences; and ſits,
Spectatreſs both and ſpectacle, a ſad
And ſilent cypher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between ſupporters; and, once ſeated, ſit,
Through downright inability to riſe,
Till the ſtout bearers lift the corpſe again.
Theſe ſpeak a loud memento. Yet ev'n theſe
Themſelves love life, and cling to it, as he
That overhangs a torrent to a twig.
They love it, and yet loath it; fear to die,
Yet ſcorn the purpoſes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
The ſlaviſh dread of ſolitude, that breeds
Reflection and remorſe, the fear of ſhame,
And their invet'rate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boaſt of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers, ſaturate with dew,

Beneath the roſy cloud, while yet the beams
Of day-ſpring overſhoot his humble neſt.
The peaſant too, a witneſs of his ſong,
Himſelf a ſongſter, is as gay as he.
But ſave me from the gaiety of thoſe
Whoſe head-aches nail them to a noon-day bed;
And ſave me too from their's whoſe haggard eyes
Flaſh deſperation, and betray their pangs
For property ſtripp'd off by cruel chance;
From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blaſphemy, the heart with woe.

The earth was made ſo various, that the mind
Of deſultory man, ſtudious of change,
And pleas'd with novelty, might be indulg'd.
Proſpects, however lovely, may be ſeen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary ſight,
Too well acquainted with their ſmiles, ſlides off,
Faſtidious, ſeeking leſs familiar ſcenes.
Then ſnug enclosures in the ſhelter'd vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us; happy to renounce awhile,
Not ſenſeleſs of its charms, what ſtill we love,
That ſuch ſhort abſence may endear it more.

Then foreſts, or the ſavage rock, may pleaſe,
That hides the ſea-mew in his hollow cleſts
Above the reach of man. His hoary head,
Conſpicuous many a league, the mariner,
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waiſt
A girdle of half-wither'd ſhrubs he ſhows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die.
The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorſe, that, ſhapeleſs and deform'd,
And dang'rous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itſelf with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleaſing ramble; there the turf
Smells freſh, and, rich in odorif'rous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the ſenſe
With luxury of unexpected ſweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of ſatin trimm'd
With lace, and hat with ſplendid ribband bound.
A ſerving maid was ſhe, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to ſea, and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To diſtant ſhores; and ſhe would ſit and weep

Stothard Del. Published Feb. 1. 1790, by J. Johnson London. Legat Sculpt.

Kate is Crazd.

At what a ſailor ſuffers; fancy, too,
Deluſive moſt where warmeſt wiſhes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of tranſports ſhe was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
And never ſmil'd again! and now ſhe roams
The dreary waſte; there ſpends the livelong day,
And there, unleſs when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tatter'd ſtill; and both but ill conceal
A boſom heav'd with never-ceaſing ſighs.
She begs an idle pin of all ſhe meets,
And hoards them in her ſleeve; but needful food,
Though preſs'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, aſks never.—Kate is craz'd!

I ſee a column of ſlow riſing ſmoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that ſkirts the wild.
A vagabond and uſeleſs tribe there eat
Their miſerable meal. A kettle, ſlung
Between two poles upon a ſtick tranſverſe,
Receives the morſel—fleſh obſcene of dog,

Or vermin, or, at beſt, of cock purloin'd
From his accuſtom'd perch. Hard faring race!
They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, juſt ſaves unquench'd
The ſpark of life. The ſportive wind blows wide
Their flutt'ring rags, and ſhows a tawny ſkin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great ſkill have they in palmiſtry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthleſs droſs into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they ſteal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and caſt
In human mould, ſhould brutalize by choice
His nature; and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit, and himſelf,
Self-baniſh'd from ſociety, prefer
Such ſqualid ſloth to honourable toil!
Yet even theſe, though, feigning ſickneſs oft,
They ſwathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their fleſh with artificial ſores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When ſafe occaſion offers; and, with dance,
And muſic of the bladder and the bag,

Beguile their woes, and make the woods reſound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houſeleſs rovers of the ſylvan world;
And, breathing wholeſome air, and wand'ring much,
Need other phyſic none to heal th' effects
Of loathſome diet, penury, and cold.

Bleſt he, though undiſtinguiſh'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells ſecure,
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aſide
His fierceneſs, having learnt, though ſlow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many; but ſupply
Is obvious, plac'd within the eaſy reach
Of temp'rate wiſhes and induſtrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper ſoil;
Not rude and ſurly, and beſet with thorns,
And terrible to ſight, as when ſhe ſprings
(If e'er ſhe ſprings ſpontaneous) in remote
And barb'rous climes, where violence prevails,
And ſtrength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tam'd, by liberty refreſh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matur'd.

War and the chaſe engroſs the ſavage whole;
War follow'd for revenge, or to ſupplant
The envied tenants of ſome happier ſpot,
The chaſe for ſuſtenance, precarious truſt!
His hard condition with ſevere conſtraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wiſdom, proves a ſchool in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean ſelf-attachment, and ſcarce aught beſide.
Thus fare the ſhiv'ring natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the weſtern world,
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards th' antarctic. Ev'n the favour'd iſles,
So lately found, although the conſtant ſun
Cheer all their ſeaſons with a grateful ſmile,
Can boaſt but little virtue; and, inert
Through plenty, loſe in morals what they gain
In manners—victims of luxurious eaſe.
Theſe therefore I can pity, plac'd remote
From all that ſcience traces, art invents,
Or inſpiration teaches; and encloſed
In boundleſs oceans, never to be paſs'd
By navigators uninform'd as they,

Or plough'd perhaps by Britiſh bark again:
But, far beyond the reſt, and with moſt cauſe,
Thee, gentle * ſavage! whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curioſity perhaps,
Or elſe vain glory, prompted us to draw
Forth from thy native bow'rs, to ſhow thee here
With what ſuperior ſkill we can abuſe
The gifts of Providence, and ſquander life.
The dream is paſt; and thou haſt found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homeſtall thatch'd with leaves. But haſt thou found
Their former charms? And, having ſeen our ſtate,
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our ſports,
And heard our muſic; are thy ſimple friends,
Thy ſimple fare, and all thy plain delights,
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
Loſt nothing by compariſon with our's?
Rude as thou art, (for we return'd thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward ſhow)
I cannot think thee yet ſo dull of heart

* Omia.

And ſpiritleſs, as never to regret
Sweets taſted here, and left as ſoon as known.
Methinks I ſee thee ſtraying on the beach,
And aſking of the ſurge that bathes thy foot
If ever it has waſh'd our diſtant ſhore.
I ſee thee weep, and thine are honeſt tears,
A patriot's for his country: thou art ſad
At thought of her forlorn and abject ſtate,
From which no pow'r of thine can raiſe her up.
Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little when ſhe paints thee thus.
She tells me, too, that duly ev'ry morn
Thou climb'ſt the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waſte
For ſight of ſhip from England. Ev'ry ſpeck
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at laſt the dull and duſky eve,
And ſends thee to thy cabin, well prepar'd
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Diſintereſted good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;

And muſt be brib'd, to compaſs earth again,
By other hopes and richer fruits than your's.

But, though true worth and virtue in the mild
And genial ſoil of cultivated life
Thrive moſt, and may perhaps thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft: in proud and gay
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
As to a common and moſt noiſome ſew'r,
The dregs and feculence of ev'ry land.
In cities foul example on moſt minds
Begets its likeneſs. Rank abundance breeds
In groſs and pamper'd cities ſloth and luſt,
And wantonneſs and gluttonous exceſs.
In cities vice is hidden with moſt eaſe,
Or ſeen with leaſt reproach; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapſe, can hope no triumph there
Beyond th' achievement of ſucceſsful flight.
I do confeſs them nurs'ries of the arts,
In which they flouriſh moſt; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect ſize.
Such London is, by taſte and wealth proclaim'd
The faireſt capital of all the world,

By riot and incontinence the worſt.
There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which Nature ſees
All her reflected features. Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a ſtone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chiſſel occupy alone
The pow'rs of ſculpture, but the ſtyle as much;
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice inciſion of her guided ſteel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a ſoil
So ſterile with what charms ſoe'er ſhe will,
The richeſt ſcen'ry and the lovelieſt forms.
Where finds philoſophy her eagle eye,
With which ſhe gazes at yon burning diſk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his ſpots?
In London: where her implements exact,
With which ſhe calculates, computes, and ſcans,
All diſtance, motion, magnitude, and now
Meaſures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce ſuch a mart,
So rich, ſo throng'd, ſo drain'd, and ſo ſupplied,
As London—opulent, enlarg'd, and ſtill
Increaſing, London? Babylon of old

Not more the glory of the earth than ſhe,
A more accompliſh'd world's chief glory now.

She has her praiſe. Now mark a ſpot or two,
That ſo much beauty would do well to purge;
And ſhow this queen of cities, that ſo fair
May yet be foul; ſo witty, yet not wiſe.
It is not ſeemly, nor of good report,
That ſhe is ſlack in diſcipline; more prompt
T' avenge than to prevent the breach of law:
That ſhe is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and oft-times honour too,
To peculators of the public gold:
That thieves at home muſt hang; but he, that puts
Into his overgorg'd and bloated purſe
The wealth of Indian provinces, eſcapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, ſhe has preſum'd t' annul
And abrogate, as roundly as ſhe may,
The total ordinance and will of God;
Advancing faſhion to the poſt of truth,
And cent'ring all authority in modes

And cuſtoms of her own, till ſabbath rites
Have dwindled into unreſpected forms,
And knees and haſſocs are well-nigh divorc'd.

God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make ſweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, ſhould moſt abound
And leaſt be threaten'd in the fields and groves?
Poſſeſs ye, therefore, ye, who, born about
In chariots and ſedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleneſs, and taſte no ſcenes
But ſuch as art contrives, poſſeſs ye ſtill
Your element; there only can ye ſhine;
There only minds like your's can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to conſole at noon
The penſive wand'rer in their ſhades. At eve
The moon-beam, ſliding ſoftly in between
The ſleeping leaves, is all the light they wiſh,
Birds warbling all the muſic. We can ſpare
The ſplendour of your lamps; they but eclipſe
Our ſofter ſatellite. Your ſongs confound
Our more harmonious notes: the thruſh departs
Scar'd, and th' offended nightingale is mute.

There is a public miſchief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly ſuch as your's,
Grac'd with a ſword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, ſtedfaſt but for you,
A mutilated ſtructure, ſoon to fall.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK II.

## ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

*Reflections ſuggeſted by the concluſion of the former book.—Peace among the nations recommended, on the ground of their common fellowſhip in ſorrow. —Prodigies enumerated.—Sicilian earthquakes.—Man rendered obnoxious to theſe calamities by ſin. —God the agent in them.—The philoſophy that ſtops at ſecondary cauſes reproved.—Our own late miſcarriages accounted for.—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau.—But the pulpit, not ſatire, the proper engine of reformation.—The Reverend Advertiſer of engraved ſermons.—Petit-maitre parſon.—The good preacher.—Pictures of a theatrical clerical coxcomb.—Story-tellers and jeſters in the pulpit reproved.—Apoſtrophe to popular applauſe.—Retailers of ancient philoſophy expoſtulated with.—Sum of the whole matter.—Effects of ſacerdotal miſmanagement on the laity.—Their folly and extravagance.—The miſchiefs of profuſion.—Profuſion itſelf, with all its conſequent evils, aſcribed, as to its principal cauſe, to the want of diſcipline in the univerſities.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK II.

## THE TIME-PIECE.

Oh for a lodge in ſome vaſt wilderneſs,
Some boundleſs contiguity of ſhade,
Where rumour of oppreſſion and deceit,
Of unſucceſsful or ſucceſsful war,
Might never reach me more. My ear is pain'd,
My ſoul is ſick, with ev'ry day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no fleſh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the nat'ral bond
Of brotherhood is ſever'd as the flax
That falls aſunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a ſkin
Not colour'd like his own; and, having pow'r

T' enforce the wrong, for ſuch a worthy cauſe
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands interfected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd
Make enemies of nations, who had elſe,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and deſtroys;
And, worſe than all, and moſt to be deplor'd,
As human nature's broadeſt, foulest blot,
Chains him, and taſks him, and exacts his ſweat
With ſtripes, that mercy, with a bleeding heart,
Weeps when ſhe ſees inflicted on a beaſt.
Then what is man? And what man, ſeeing this,
And having human feelings, does not bluſh,
And hang his head, to think himſelf a man?
I would not have a ſlave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I ſleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That ſinews bought and ſold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Juſt eſtimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myſelf the ſlave,
And wear the bonds, than faſten them on him.
We have no ſlaves at home.—Then why abroad?

And they themſelves, once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their ſhackles fall.
That's noble, and beſpeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the bleſſing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through ev'ry vein
Of all your empire; that where Britain's pow'r
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of ſocial intercourſe,
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
Between the nations, in a world that ſeems
To toll the death-bell of its own deceaſe,
And by the voice of all its elements
To preach the gen'ral doom *. When were the winds
Let ſlip with ſuch a warrant to deſtroy?
When did the waves ſo haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fires from beneath, and meteors † from above,

* Alluding to the calamities at Jamaica.
† Auguſt 18, 1783.

Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,
Have kindled beacons in the ſkies; and th' old
And crazy earth has had her ſhaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her uſual reſt.
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet ſeem to fail,
And Nature * with a dim and ſickly eye
To wait the cloſe of all? But grant her end
More diſtant, and that prophecy demands
A longer reſpite, unaccompliſh'd yet;
Still they are frowning ſignals, and beſpeak
Diſpleaſure in his breaſt who ſmites the earth
Or heals it, makes it languiſh or rejoice.
And 'tis but ſeemly, that, where all deſerve
And ſtand expos'd by common peccancy
To what no few have felt, there ſhould be peace,
And brethren in calamity ſhould love.

Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now
Lie ſcatter'd where the ſhapely column ſtood.
Her palaces are duſt. In all her ſtreets
The voice of ſinging and the ſprightly chord

* Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Aſia during the whole ſummer of 1783.

Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause;
While God performs upon the trembling stage
Of his own works his dreadful part alone.
How does the earth receive him?—With what signs
Of gratulation and delight, her king?
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
Her sweetest flow'rs, her aromatic gums,
Disclosing paradise where'er he treads?
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns roars beneath his foot.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For he has touch'd them. From th' extremest point
Of elevation down into th' abyss
His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong, and the vallies rise,
The rivers die into offensive pools,
And, charg'd with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid; and the fixt and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl

Sucks down its prey inſatiable. Immenſe
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on ev'ry ſide,
And fugitive in vain. The ſylvan ſcene
Migrates uplifted; and, with all its ſoil
Alighting in far diſtant fields, finds out
A new poſſeſſor, and ſurvives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice
Which winds and waves obey, invades the ſhore
Reſiſtleſs. Never ſuch a ſudden flood,
Upridg'd ſo high, and ſent on ſuch a charge,
Poſſeſs'd an inland ſcene. Where now the throng
That preſs'd the beach, and, haſty to depart,
Look'd to the ſea for ſafety? They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep—
A prince with half his people! Ancient tow'rs,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy ſcenes
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth conſume
Life in the unproductive ſhades of death,
Fall prone: the pale inhabitants come forth,
And, happy in their unforeſeen releaſe

From all the rigours of reſtraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that ſets them free.
Who then, that has thee, would not hold thee faſt,
Freedom! whom they that loſe thee ſo regret,
That e'en a judgment, making way for thee,
Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy ſake.

Such evil ſin hath wrought; and ſuch a flame
Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,
And, in the furious inqueſt that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waſte his faireſt works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The miniſter of man, to ſerve his wants,
Conſpire againſt him. With his breath he draws
A plague into his blood; and cannot uſe
Life's neceſſary means, but he muſt die.
Storms riſe t' o'erwhelm him: or, if ſtormy winds
Riſe not, the waters of the deep ſhall riſe,
And, needing none aſſiſtance of the ſtorm,
Shall roll themſelves aſhore, and reach him there.
The earth ſhall ſhake him out of all his holds,
Or make his houſe his grave: nor ſo content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,

And drown him in her dry and dusty gulphs.
What then!—were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast anchor'd isle
Mov'd not, while their's was rock'd, like a light skiff,
The sport of ev'ry wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But, where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark:
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spar'd not them,
Tremble and be amaz'd at thine escape,
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee!

Happy the man who sees a God employ'd
In all the good and ill that chequer life!
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns (since from the least
The greatest oft originate); could chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan;
Then God might be surpris'd, and unforeseen

Contingence might alarm him, and diſturb
The ſmooth and equal courſe of his affairs.
This truth philoſophy, though eagle-ey'd
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;
And, having found his inſtrument, forgets,
Or diſregards, or, more preſumptuous ſtill,
Denies the pow'r that wields it. God proclaims
His hot diſpleaſure againſt fooliſh men,
That live an atheiſt life: involves the heav'n
In tempeſts; quits his graſp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the ſkin,
And putrify the breath of blooming health.
He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his ſhrivel'd lips,
And taints the golden ear. He ſprings his mines,
And deſolates a nation at a blaſt.
Forth ſteps the ſpruce philoſopher, and tells
Of homogenial and diſcordant ſprings
And principles; of cauſes, how they work
By neceſſary laws their ſure effects;
Of action and re-action. He has found
The ſource of the diſeaſe that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and baniſh fear.

Thou fool! will thy diſcovery of the cauſe
Suſpend th' effect, or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means ſince firſt he made the world?
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation leſs
Than a capacious reſervoir of means
Form'd for his uſe, and ready at his will?
Go, dreſs thine eyes with eye-ſalve; aſk of him,
Or aſk of whomſoever he has taught;
And learn, though late, the genuine cauſe of all.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee ſtill—
My country! and, while yet a nook is left
Where Engliſh minds and manners may be found,
Shall be conſtrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year moſt part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a froſt,
I would not yet exchange thy ſullen ſkies,
And fields without a flow'r, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Auſonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs.
To ſhake thy ſenate, and from heights ſublime
Of patriot eloquence to flaſh down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my taſk:

But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and ſorrows, with as true a heart
As any thund'rer there. And I can feel
Thy follies, too; and with a juſt diſdain
Frown at effeminates, whoſe very looks
Reflect diſhonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of ſoldierſhip and ſenſe,
Should England proſper, when ſuch things, as ſmooth
And tender as a girl, all eſſenc'd o'er
With odours, and as profligate as ſweet;
Who ſell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they ſhould fight; when ſuch as theſe
Preſume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cauſe?
Time was when it was praiſe and boaſt enough
In ev'ry clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children. Praiſe enough
To fill th' ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell thoſe honours, and farewell with them
The hope of ſuch hereafter! They have fall'n

Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap
Of ſmiling victory that moment won,
And Chatham heart-ſick of his country's ſhame!
They made us many ſoldiers. Chatham, ſtill
Conſulting England's happineſs at home,
Secur'd it by an unforgiving frown,
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put ſo much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were ſwift to follow whom all lov'd.
Thoſe ſuns are ſet. Oh, riſe ſome other ſuch!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and deſpair of new.

Now hoiſt the ſail, and let the ſtreamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and ſprinkle liquid ſweets,
That no rude ſavour maritime invade
The noſe of nice nobility! Breathe ſoft,
Ye clarionets; and ſofter ſtill, ye flutes;
That winds and waters, lull'd by magic ſounds,
May bear us ſmoothly to the Gallic ſhore!
True, we have loſt an empire—let it paſs.

True; we may thank the perfidy of France,
That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,
With all the cunning of an envious ſhrew.
And let that paſs—'twas but a trick of ſtate!
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
And gives his direſt foe a friend's embrace.
And, ſham'd as we have been, to th' very beard
Brav'd and defied, and in our own ſea prov'd
Too weak for thoſe deciſive blows that once
Enſured us maſt'ry there, we yet retain
Some ſmall pre-eminence; we juſtly boaſt
At leaſt ſuperior jockeyſhip, and claim
The honours of the turf as all our own!
Go, then, well worthy of the praiſe ye ſeek,
And ſhow the ſhame ye might conceal at home
In foreign eyes!—be grooms, and win the plate
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—
'Tis gen'rous to communicate your ſkill
To thoſe that need it. Folly is ſoon learn'd;
And, under ſuch preceptors, who can fail!

There is a pleaſure in poetic pains
Which only poets know. The ſhifts and turns,

Th' expedients and inventions, multiform,
To which the mind reforts, in chaſe of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—
T' arreſt the fleeting images that fill
The mirror of the mind, and hold them faſt,
And force them ſit till he has pencil'd off
A faithful likeneſs of the forms he views;
Then to diſpoſe his copies with ſuch art,
That each may find its moſt propitious light,
And ſhine by ſituation, hardly leſs
Than by the labour and the ſkill it coſt;
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleaſing, and that ſteal away the thought
With ſuch addreſs from themes of ſad import,
That, loſt in his own muſings, happy man!
He feels th' anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that ſings. But ah! not ſuch,
Or ſeldom ſuch, the hearers of his ſong.
Faſtidious, or elſe liſtleſs, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in a taſk
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or eſcapes, and hap'ſ find
There leaſt amuſement where he found the moſt.

But is amuſement all? ſtudious of ſong,
And yet ambitious not to ſing in vain,
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudeſt in their praiſe who do no more.
Yet what can ſatire, whether grave or gay?
It may correct a foible, may chaſtiſe
The freaks of faſhion, regulate the dreſs,
Retrench a ſword-blade, or diſplace a patch;
But where are its ſublimer trophies found?
What vice has it ſubdu'd? whoſe heart reclaim'd
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
Alas! Leviathan is not ſo tam'd:
Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and, ſtricken hard,
Turns to the ſtroke his adamantine ſcales,
That fear no diſcipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore (and I name it fill'd
With ſolemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—
The pulpit (when the ſat'riſt has at laſt,
Strutting and vap'ring in an empty ſchool,
Spent all his force and made no proſelyte)—
I ſay the pulpit (in the ſober uſe
Of its legitimate, peculiar pow'rs)

Muſt ſtand acknowledg'd, while the world ſhall ſtand,
The moſt important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament, of virtue's cauſe.
There ſtands the meſſenger of truth: there ſtands
The legate of the ſkies!—His theme divine,
His office ſacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law ſpeaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in ſtrains as ſweet
As angels uſe, the goſpel whiſpers peace.
He 'ſtabliſhes the ſtrong, reſtores the weak,
Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himſelf in panoply complete
Of heav'nly temper, furniſhes with arms,
Bright as his own, and trains, by ev'ry rule
Of holy diſcipline, to glorious war,
The ſacramental hoſt of God's elect!
Are all ſuch teachers?—would to heav'n all were!
But hark—the doctor's voice!—faſt wedg'd between
Two empirics he ſtands, and with ſwoln cheeks
Inſpires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and, defying ſhame,

Announces to the world his own and their's!
He teaches thoſe to read, whom ſchools diſmiſs'd,
And colleges, untaught; ſells accent, tone,
And emphaſis in ſcore, and gives to pray'r
Th' *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern uſe; transforms old print
To zig-zag manuſcript, and cheats the eyes
Of gall'ry critics by a thouſand arts.
Are there who purchaſe of the doctor's ware?
Oh, name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,
That grave and learned clerks ſhould need ſuch aid.
He doubtleſs is in ſport, and does but droll,
Aſſuming thus a rank unknown before—
Grand caterer and dry-nurſe of the church!

I venerate the man whoſe heart is warm,
Whoſe hands are pure, whoſe doctrine and whoſe life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honeſt in the ſacred cauſe.
To ſuch I render more than mere reſpect,
Whoſe actions ſay that they reſpect themſelves.
But, looſe in morals, and in manners vain,

In converſation frivolous, in dreſs
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuſe;
Frequent in park with lady at his ſide,
Ambling and prattling ſcandal as he goes;
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with his pen, ſave when he ſcrawls a card;
Conſtant at routs, familiar with a round
Of ladyſhips—a ſtranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well-prepar'd, by ignorance and ſloth,
By infidelity and love of world,
To make God's work a ſinecure; a ſlave
To his own pleaſures and his patron's pride:
From ſuch apoſtles, oh, ye mitred heads,
Preſerve the church! and lay not careleſs hands
On ſculls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I deſcribe a preacher, ſuch as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own—
Paul ſhould himſelf direct me. I would trace
His maſter-ſtrokes, and draw from his deſign.
I would expreſs him ſimple, grave, ſincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, ſolemn, chaſte,

And natural in geſture; much impreſs'd
Himſelf, as conſcious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in addreſs, as well becomes
A meſſenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the roſtrum with a ſkip,
And then ſkip down again; pronounce a text;
Cry—hem; and, reading what they never wrote,
Juſt fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whiſper cloſe the ſcene!

In man or woman, but far moſt in man,
And moſt of all in man that miniſters
And ſerves the altar, in my ſoul I loath
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect ſcorn;
Object of my implacable diſguſt.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A filly fond conceit of his fair form,
And juſt proportion, faſhionable mien,
And pretty face, in preſence of his God?
Or will he ſeek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the di'mond on his lily hand,

And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, proſtitutes and ſhames
His noble office, and, inſtead of truth,
Diſplaying his own beauty, ſtarves his flock!
Therefore avaunt all attitude, and ſtare,
And ſtart theatric, practiſed at the glaſs!
I ſeek divine ſimplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all beſides,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admir'd
By curious eyes and judgments ill inform'd,
To me is odious as the naſal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Miſled by cuſtom, ſtrain celeſtial themes
Through the preſt noſtril, ſpectacle-beſtrid.
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,
That taſk perform'd, relapſe into themſelves;
And, having ſpoken wiſely, at the cloſe
Grow wanton, and give proof to ev'ry eye—
Whoe'er was edified, themſelves were not!
Forth comes the pocket mirror.—Firſt we ſtroke
An eye-brow; next, compoſe a ſtraggling lock;
Then with an air, moſt gracefully perform'd,

Fall back into our ſeat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its eaſe with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand depending low:
The better hand, more buſy, gives the noſe
Its bergamot, or aids th' indebted eye
With op'ra glaſs, to watch the moving ſcene,
And recognize the ſlow-retiring fair.—
Now this is fulſome; and offends me more
Than in a churchman ſlovenly neglect
And ruſtic coarſeneſs would. An heav'nly mind
May be indiff'rent to her houſe of clay,
And ſlight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body ſo fantaſtic, trim,
And quaint, in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge an heav'nly mind—demands a doubt.

He that negociates between God and man,
As God's ambaſſador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, ſhould beware
Of lightneſs in his ſpeech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you ſhould woo a ſoul;
To break a jeſt, when pity would inſpire
Pathetic exhortation; and t' addreſs
The ſkittiſh fancy with facetious tales,

When ſent with God's commiſſion to the heart!
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I conſent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till ſides and benches fail.
No: he was ſerious in a ſerious cauſe,
And underſtood too well the weighty terms
That he had ta'en in charge. He would not ſtoop
To conquer thoſe by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and ſoberneſs aſſail'd in vain.

Oh, popular applauſe! what heart of man
Is proof againſt thy ſweet ſeducing charms?
The wiſeſt and the beſt feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentleſt gales;
But, ſwell'd into a guſt—who then, alas!
With all his canvaſs ſet, and inexpert,
And therefore heedleſs, can withſtand thy pow'r?
Praiſe from the rivel'd lips of toothleſs, bald
Decrepitude; and in the looks of lean
And craving poverty; and in the bow
Reſpectful of the ſmutch'd artificer;
Is oft too welcome, and may much diſturb
The bias of the purpoſe. How much more,

Pour'd forth by beauty ſplendid and polite,
In language ſoft as adoration breathes?
Ah, ſpare your idol! think him human ſtill.
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too!
Dote not too much, nor ſpoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the ſempiternal ſource
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,
Drew from the ſtream below. More favour'd, we
Drink, when we chooſe it, at the fountain head.
To them it flow'd much mingled and defil'd
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
Illuſive of philoſophy, ſo call'd,
But falſely. Sages after ſages ſtrove
In vain to filter off a cryſtal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanc'd
The thirſt that ſlak'd it, and not ſeldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.
In vain they puſh'd inquiry to the birth
And ſpring-time of the world; aſk'd, Whence is man?
Why form'd at all? and wherefore as he is?
Where muſt he find his Maker? with what rites
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bleſs?

Or does he ſit regardleſs of his works?
Has man within him an immortal ſeed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he ſurvive
His aſhes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of ſolution, which alone
A Deity could ſolve. Their anſwers, vague,
And all at random, fabulous, and dark,
Left them as dark themſelves. Their rules of life,
Defective and unſanction'd, prov'd too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis revelation ſatisfies all doubts,
Explains all myſteries, except her own,
And ſo illuminates the path of life,
That fools diſcover it, and ſtray no more.
Now tell me, dignified and ſapient ſir,
My man of morals, nurtur'd in the ſhades
Of Academus—is this falſe or true?
Is Chriſt the abler teacher, or the ſchools?
If Chriſt, then why reſort at ev'ry turn
To Athens or to Rome, for wiſdom ſhort
Of man's occaſions, when in him reſide
Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd ſtore?
How oft, when Paul has ſerv'd us with a text,

Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd!
Men that, if now alive, would fit content
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirſt of knowledge, and their candour too!

And thus it is.—The paſtor, either vain
By nature, or by flatt'ry made ſo, taught
To gaze at his own ſplendour, and t' exalt
Abſurdly, not his office, but himſelf;
Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn;
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach;
Perverting often, by the ſtreſs of lewd
And looſe example, whom he ſhould inſtruct;
Expoſes, and holds up to broad diſgrace,
The nobleſt function, and diſcredits much
The brighteſt truths that man has ever ſeen.
For ghoſtly counſel; if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not back'd
With ſhow of love, at leaſt with hopeful proof
Of ſome ſincerity on th' giver's part;
Or be diſhonour'd, in th' exterior form
And mode of its conveyance, by ſuch tricks
As move deriſion, or by foppiſh airs

And hiſtrionic mumm'ry, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the ſtage;
Drops from the lips a diſregarded thing.
The weak perhaps are mov'd, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of ſtronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they ſee.
A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutor'd heart
Soon follows, and, the curb of conſcience ſnapt,
The laity run wild.—But do they now?
Note their extravagance, and be convinc'd.

As nations, ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one, ſo we, no longer taught
By monitors that mother church ſupplies,
Now make our own. Poſterity will aſk
(If e'er poſterity ſee verſe of mine)
Some fifty or an hundred luſtrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days?
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs muſt augur better things,
Since heav'n would ſure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like our's,
A monitor is wood—plank ſhaven thin.

We wear it at our backs. There, cloſely brac'd
And neatly fitted, it compreſſes hard
The prominent and moſt unſightly bones,
And binds the ſhoulders flat. We prove its uſe
Sov'reign and moſt effectual to ſecure
A form, not now gymnaſtic as of yore,
From rickets and diſtortion, elſe our lot.
But, thus admoniſh'd, we can walk erect—
One proof at leaſt of manhood! while the friend
Sticks cloſe, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
Our habits, coſtlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Juſt pleaſe us while the faſhion is at full,
But change with ev'ry moon. The ſycophant,
Who waits to dreſs us, arbitrates their date;
Surveys his fair reverſion with keen eye;
Finds one ill made, another obſolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceiv'd;
And, making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own.
Variety's the very ſpice of life,
That gives it all its flavour. We have run
Through ev'ry change that fancy at the loom,
Exhauſted, has had genius to ſupply;

And, ſtudious of mutation ſtill, diſcard
A real elegance, a little us'd,
For monſtrous novelty and ſtrange diſguiſe.
We ſacrifice to dreſs, till houſehold joys
And comforts ceaſe. Dreſs drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires;
And introduces hunger, froſt, and wo,
Where peace and hoſpitality might reign.
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
Would fail t' exhibit at the public ſhows
A form as ſplendid as the proudeſt there,
Though appetite raiſe outcries at the coſt?
A man o' th' town dines late, but ſoon enough,
With reaſonable forecaſt and diſpatch,
T' inſure a ſide-box ſtation at half price.
You think, perhaps, ſo delicate his dreſs,
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and, buſy as he ſeems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet!
The rout is folly's circle, which ſhe draws
With magic wand. So potent is the ſpell,
That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unleſs by heaven's peculiar grace, eſcape.
There we grow early gray, but never wiſe;

There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
Solicit pleaſure, hopeleſs of ſucceſs;
Waſte youth in occupations only fit
For ſecond childhood, and devote old age
To ſports which only childhood could excuſe.
There they are happieſt who diſſemble beſt
Their wearineſs; and they the moſt polite
Who ſquander time and treaſure with a ſmile,
Though at their own deſtruction. She, that aſks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They (what can they leſs?)
Make juſt repriſals; and, with cringe and ſhrug,
And bow obſequious, hide their hate of her.
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,
Whoſe flambeaux flaſh againſt the morning ſkies,
And gild our chamber ceilings as they paſs,
To her who, frugal only that her thrift
May feed exceſſes ſhe can ill afford,
Is hackney'd home unlacquey'd; who, in haſte
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
Wives beggar huſbands, huſbands ſtarve their wives,
On fortune's velvet altar off'ring up

Their laſt poor pittance—fortune, moſt ſevere
Of goddeſſes yet known, and coſtlier far
Than all that held their routs in Juno's heav'n.—
So fare we in this priſon-houſe the world.
And 'tis a fearful ſpectacle to ſee
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
They gaze upon the links that hold them faſt
With eyes of anguiſh, execrate their lot,
Then ſhake them in deſpair, and dance again!

Now baſket up the family of plagues
That waſte our vitals; peculation, ſale
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by ſubterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as num'rous and as keen
As the neceſſities their authors feel;
Then caſt them, cloſely bundled, ev'ry brat
At the right door. Profuſion is the fire.
Profuſion unreſtrain'd, with all that's baſe
In character, has litter'd all the land,
And bred, within the mem'ry of no few,
A prieſthood ſuch as Baal's was of old,
A people ſuch as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all

That gives ſociety its beauty, ſtrength,
Convenience, and ſecurity, and uſe:
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
And gibbetted as faſt as catchpole claws
Can ſeize the ſlipp'ry prey: unties the knot
Of union, and converts the ſacred band
That holds mankind together to a ſcourge.
Profuſion, deluging a ſtate with luſts
Of groſſeſt nature and of worſt effects,
Prepares it for its ruin: hardens, blinds,
And warps, the conſciences of public men,
Till they can laugh at virtue; mock the fools
That truſt them; and, in th' end, diſcloſe a face
That would have ſhock'd credulity herſelf,
Unmaſk'd, vouchſafing this their ſole excuſe—
Since all alike are ſelfiſh, why not they?
This does profuſion, and th' accurſed cauſe
Of ſuch deep miſchief has itſelf a cauſe.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth,
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a ſage call'd Diſcipline. His head,
Not yet by time completely ſilver'd o'er,

Beſpoke him paſt the bounds of freakiſh youth,
But ſtrong for ſervice ſtill, and unimpair'd.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a ſmile
Play'd on his lips; and in his ſpeech was heard
Paternal ſweetneſs, dignity, and love.
The occupation deareſt to his heart
Was to encourage goodneſs. He would ſtroke
The head of modeſt and ingenuous worth,
That bluſh'd at its own praiſe; and preſs the youth
Cloſe to his ſide that pleas'd him. Learning grew,
Beneath his care, a thriving vig'rous plant;
The mind was well inform'd, the paſſions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanc'd, as ſometimes chance it muſt,
That one among ſo many overleap'd
The limits of controul, his gentle eye
Grew ſtern, and darted a ſevere rebuke:
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with ſuch fits of awe
As left him not, till penitence had won
Loſt favour back again, and clos'd the breach.
But Diſcipline, a faithful ſervant long,
Declin'd at length into the vale of years:
A palſy ſtruck his arm; his ſparkling eye

Fothard Del. Published Feb.ʳʸ 1798 by J Johnson London. Angus Sculpt

——— and prefs'd the Youth
Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew
Beneath his care ———

Was quench'd in rheums of age; his voice, unſtrung,
Grew tremulous, and mov'd deriſion more
Than rev'rence in perverſe rebellious youth.
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend; and Diſcipline at length,
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell ſick and died.
Then ſtudy languiſh'd, emulation ſlept,
And virtue fled. The ſchools became a ſcene
Of ſolemn farce, where Ignorance in ſtilts,
His cap well lin'd with logic not his own,
With parrot tongue perform'd the ſcholar's part,
Proceeding ſoon a graduated dunce.
Then compromiſe had place, and ſcrutiny
Became ſtone-blind; precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whoſe purſe was ſo.
A diſſolution of all bonds enſued;
The curbs, invented for the muliſh mouth
Of head-ſtrong youth, were broken; bars and bolts
Grew ruſty by diſuſe; and maſſy gates
Forgot their office, op'ning with a touch;
Till gowns at length are found mere maſquerade,
The taſſell'd cap and the ſpruce band a jeſt,
A mock'ry of the world! What need of theſe
For gameſters, jockeys, brothellers impure,

Spendthrifts, and booted ſportſmen, oft'ner ſeen
With belted waiſt and pointers at their heels
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learn'd,
If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot;
And ſuch expenſe as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the lib'ral hand of love,
Is ſquander'd in purſuit of idle ſports
And vicious pleaſures; buys the boy a name,
That ſits a ſtigma on his father's houſe,
And cleaves through life inſeparably cloſe
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world, that muſt receive him ſoon,
Add to ſuch erudition, thus acquir'd,
Where ſcience and where virtue are profeſs'd?
They may confirm his habits, rivet faſt
His folly, but to ſpoil him is a taſk
That bids defiance to th' united pow'rs
Of faſhion, diſſipation, taverns, ſtews.
Now, blame we moſt the nurſlings or the nurſe?
The children, crook'd, and twiſted, and deform'd,
Through want of care; or her, whoſe winking eye
And ſlumb'ring oſcitancy mars the brood?
The nurſe no doubt. Regardleſs of her charge,

She needs herſelf correction; needs to learn,
That it is dang'rous ſporting with the world,
With things ſo ſacred as a nation's truſt,
The nurture of her youth, her deareſt pledge.

All are not ſuch. I had a brother once—
Peace to the mem'ry of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too!
Of manners ſweet as virtue always wears,
When gay good-nature dreſſes her in ſmiles.
He grac'd a college *, in which order yet
Was ſacred; and was honour'd, lov'd, and wept,
By more than one, themſelves conſpicuous there.
Some minds are temper'd happily, and mixt
With ſuch ingredients of good ſenſe and taſte
Of what is excellent in man, they thirſt
With ſuch a zeal to be what they approve,
That no reſtraints can circumſcribe them more
Than they themſelves by choice, for wiſdom's ſake;
Nor can example hurt them: what they ſee
Of vice in others but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their juſt eſteem.

* Ben'et Coll. Cambridge.

If ſuch eſcape contagion, and emerge
Pure, from ſo foul a pool, to ſhine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themſelves,
Small thanks to thoſe whoſe negligence or ſloth
Expos'd their inexperience to the ſnare,
And left them to an undirected choice.

See, then, the quiver broken and decay'd,
In which are kept our arrows! Ruſting there
In wild diſorder, and unfit for uſe,
What wonder if, diſcharg'd into the world,
They ſhame their ſhooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuſe, and feathers drunk with wine!
Well may the church wage unſucceſsful war,
With ſuch artill'ry arm'd. Vice parries wide
Th' undreaded volley with a ſword of ſtraw,
And ſtands an impudent and fearleſs mark.

Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birth-place and his dam? The country mourns—
Mourns, becauſe ev'ry plague that can infeſt
Society, and that ſaps and worms the baſe
Of th' edifice that policy has rais'd,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,

And ſuffocates the breath at ev'ry turn.
Profuſion breeds them; and the cauſe itſelf
Of that calamitous miſchief has been found:
Found, too, where moſt offenſive, in the ſkirts
Of the rob'd pedagogue! Elſe, let th' arraign'd
Stand up unconſcious, and refute the charge.
So, when the Jewiſh leader ſtretch'd his arm,
And wav'd his rod divine, a race obſcene,
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
Polluting Egypt: gardens, fields, and plains,
Were cover'd with the peſt; the ſtreets were fill'd;
The croaking nuiſance lurk'd in ev'ry nook;
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'ſcap'd;
And the land ſtank—ſo num'rous was the fry.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK III.

## ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

*Self-recollection and reproof.—Addreſs to domeſtic happineſs.—Some account of myſelf.—The vanity of many of their purſuits who are reputed wiſe.—Juſtification of my cenſures.—Divine illumination neceſſary to the moſt expert philoſopher.—The queſtion, What is truth? anſwered by other queſtions.—Domeſtic happineſs addreſſed again.—Few lovers of the country.—My tame hare.—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden.—Pruning.—Framing.—Greenhouſe.—Sowing of flower-ſeeds.—The country preferable to the town even in the winter.—Reaſons why it is deſerted at that ſeaſon.—Ruinous effects of gaming and of expenſive improvement.—Book concludes with an apoſtrophe to the metropolis.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK III.

## THE GARDEN.

As one who, long in thickets and in brakes
Entangled, winds now this way and now that,
His devious courſe uncertain, ſeeking home;
Or, having long in miry ways been foil'd
And ſore diſcomfited, from ſlough to ſlough
Plunging, and half deſpairing of eſcape;
If chance at length he find a greenſward ſmooth
And faithful to the foot, his ſpirits riſe,
He chirrups briſk his ear-erecting ſteed,
And winds his way with pleaſure and with eaſe;
So I, deſigning other themes, and call'd
T' adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its ſlumbers, and to paint its dreams,

Have rambled wide. In country, city, ſeat
Of academic fame (howe'er deſerv'd),
Long held, and ſcarcely diſengag'd at laſt.
But now, with pleaſant pace, a cleanlier road
I mean to tread. I feel myſelf at large,
Courageous, and refreſh'd for future toil,
If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and ſounding-boards reflect
Moſt part an empty ineffectual ſound,
What chance that I, to fame ſo little known,
Nor converſant with men or manners much,
Should ſpeak to purpoſe, or with better hope
Crack the ſatiric thong? 'Twere wiſer far
For me, enamour'd of ſequeſter'd ſcenes,
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repoſe,
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs, when ſummer ſears the plains;
Or, when rough winter rages, on the ſoft
And ſhelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;
There, undiſturb'd by folly, and appriz'd
How great the danger of diſturbing her,
To muſe in ſilence, or at leaſt confine

Remarks that gall ſo many to the few
My partners in retreat. Diſguſt conceal'd
Is oft-times proof of wiſdom, when the fault
Is obſtinate, and cure beyond our reach.

" Domeſtic happineſs, thou only bliſs
Of Paradiſe that has ſurviv'd the fall!"
Though few now taſte thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or, taſting, long enjoy thee; too infirm,
Or too incautious, to preſerve thy ſweets
Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper ſheds into thy cryſtal cup.
Thou art the nurſe of virtue—in thine arms
She ſmiles, appearing, as in truth ſhe is,
Heav'n-born, and deſtin'd to the ſkies again.
Thou art not known where pleaſure is ador'd,
That reeling goddeſs with a zoneleſs waiſt
And wand'ring eyes, ſtill leaning on the arm
Of novelty, her fickle frail ſupport;
For thou art meek and conſtant, hating change,
And finding, in the calm of truth-tried love,
Joys that her ſtormy raptures never yield.
Forſaking thee, what ſhipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!

Till proſtitution elbows us aſide
In all our crowded ſtreets; and ſenates ſeem
Conven'd for purpoſes of empire leſs
Than to releaſe th' adultreſs from her bond.
Th' adultreſs! what a theme for angry verſe!
What provocation to th' indignant heart
That feels for injur'd love! but I diſdain
The nauſeous taſk to paint her as ſhe is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her ſhame!
No:—let her paſs, and, chariotted along
In guilty ſplendour, ſhake the public ways;
(The frequency of crimes has waſh'd them white!
And verſe of mine ſhall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now, of character unſmirch'd,
And chaſte themſelves, are not aſham'd to own.
Virtue and vice had bound'ries in old time,
Not to be paſs'd: and ſhe, that had renounc'd
Her ſex's honour, was renounc'd herſelf
By all that priz'd it; not for prud'ry's ſake,
But dignity's, reſentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard, perhaps, on here and there a waif,
Deſirous to return, and not receiv'd;
But was an wholeſome rigour in the main,
And taught th' unblemiſh'd to preſerve with care

That purity, whoſe loſs was loſs of all.
Men, too, were nice in honour in thoſe days,
And judg'd offenders well. Then he that ſharp'd,
And pocketted a prize by fraud obtain'd,
Was mark'd and ſhunn'd as odious. He that ſold
His country, or was ſlack when ſhe requir'd
His ev'ry nerve in action and at ſtretch,
Paid, with the blood that he had baſely ſpar'd,
The price of his default. But now—yes, now
We are become ſo candid and ſo fair,
So lib'ral in conſtruction, and ſo rich
In Chriſtian charity, (good-natur'd age!)
That they are ſafe, ſinners of either ſex,
Tranſgreſs what laws they may. Well dreſs'd, well bred,
Well equipag'd, is ticket good enough
To paſs us readily through ev'ry door.
Hypocriſy, deteſt her as we may,
(And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet)
May claim this merit ſtill—that ſhe admits
The worth of what ſhe mimics with ſuch care,
And thus gives virtue indirect applauſe;
But ſhe has burnt her maſk, not needed here,
Where vice has ſuch allowance, that her ſhifts
And ſpecious ſemblances have loſt their uſe.

I was a ſtricken deer, that left the herd
Long ſince; with many an arrow deep infixt,
My panting ſide was charg'd, when I withdrew
To ſeek a tranquil death in diſtant ſhades.
There was I found by one who had himſelf
Been hurt by th' archers. In his ſide he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel ſcars.
With gentle force ſoliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.
Since then, with few aſſociates, in remote
And ſilent woods I wander, far from thoſe
My former partners of the peopled ſcene;
With few aſſociates, and not wiſhing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I ſee that all are wand'rers, gone aſtray
Each in his own deluſions; they are loſt
In chaſe of fancied happineſs, ſtill woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream enſues;
And ſtill they dream that they ſhall ſtill ſucceed,
And ſtill are diſappointed. Rings the world
With the vain ſtir. I ſum up half mankind,
And add two thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears

Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That ſpreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon,
To ſport their ſeaſon, and be ſeen no more.
The reſt are ſober dreamers, grave and wiſe,
And pregnant with diſcov'ries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known; and call the rant
An hiſtory: deſcribe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note;
And paint his perſon, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They diſentangle from the puzzled ſkein,
In which obſcurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and ſhrewd deſign,
That ran through all his purpoſes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or, having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
The ſolid earth, and from the ſtrata there
Extract a regiſter, by which we learn,
That he who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moſes, was miſtaken in its age.
Some, more acute, and more induſtrious ſtill,
Contrive creation; travel nature up

To the ſharp peak of her ſublimeſt height,
And tell us whence the ſtars; why ſome are fix'd,
And planetary ſome; what gave them firſt
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great conteſt follows, and much learned duſt
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,
And truth diſclaiming both. And thus they ſpend
The little wick of life's poor ſhallow lamp,
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To diſtant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums
Should ever teaſe the lungs and blear the ſight
Of oracles like theſe? Great pity too,
That, having wielded th' elements, and built
A thouſand ſyſtems, each in his own way,
They ſhould go out in fume, and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus ſpent? and what are they
But frantic who thus ſpend it? all for ſmoke—
Eternity for bubbles, proves at laſt
A ſenſeleſs bargain. When I ſee ſuch games
Play'd by the creatures of a pow'r who ſwears
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a ſharp reck'ning that has liv'd in vain;
And when I weigh this ſeeming wiſdom well,

And prove it in th' infallible reſult
So hollow and ſo falſe—I feel my heart
Diſſolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, moſt of all deceiv'd.
Great crimes alarm the conſcience, but it ſleeps
While thoughtful man is plauſibly amus'd.
Defend me, therefore, common ſenſe, ſay I,
From reveries ſo airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!

'Twere well, ſays one ſage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his noſe,
And overbuilt with moſt impending brows,
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live
As the world pleaſes. What's the world to you?—
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk,
As ſweet as charity, from human breaſts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exerciſe all functions of a man.
How then ſhould I and any man that lives
Be ſtrangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimſon ſtream meand'ring there,
And catechiſe it well; apply thy glaſs,

Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own: and, if it be,
What edge of ſubtlety canſt thou ſuppoſe
Keen enough, wiſe and ſkilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?
True; I am no proficient, I confeſs,
In arts like your's. I cannot call the ſwift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themſelves in earth beneath;
I cannot analyſe the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point,
That ſeems half quench'd in the immenſe abyſs;
Such pow'rs I boaſt not—neither can I reſt
A ſilent witneſs of the headlong rage
Or heedleſs folly by which thouſands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred ſouls to mine.

God never meant that man ſhould ſcale the heav'ns
By ſtrides of human wiſdom. In his works,
Though wondrous, he commands us in his word
To ſeek *him* rather, where his mercy ſhines.
The mind indeed, enlighten'd from above,
Views him in all; aſcribes to the grand cauſe

The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
His manner, and with rapture taſtes his ſtyle.
But never yet did philoſophic tube, telescope
That brings the planets home into the eye
Of obſervation, and diſcovers, elſe
Not viſible, his family of worlds,
Diſcover him that rules them; ſuch a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
And dark in things divine. Full often, too,
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her author more;
From inſtrumental cauſes proud to draw
Concluſions retrograde, and mad miſtake.
But if his word once teach us, ſhoot a ray
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiſcern'd but by that holy light,
Then all is plain. Philoſophy, baptiz'd
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed; and, viewing all ſhe ſees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives *him* his praiſe, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has born ſuch fruit in other days
On all her branches: piety has found
Friends in the friends of ſcience, and true pray'r

Has flow'd from lips wet with Caſtalian dews.
Such was thy wiſdom, Newton, childlike ſage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in his word ſagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whoſe genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna! And ſuch thine, in whom
Our Britiſh Themis gloried with juſt cauſe,
Immortal Hale! for deep diſcernment prais'd
And ſound integrity, not more than fam'd
For ſanctity of manners undefil'd.

All fleſh is graſs, and all its glory fades
Like the fair flow'r diſhevell'd in the wind;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream:
The man we celebrate muſt find a tomb,
And we that worſhip him ignoble graves.
Nothing is proof againſt the gen'ral curſe
Of vanity, that ſeizes all below.
The only amaranthine flow'r on earth
Is virtue; th' only laſting treaſure, truth.
But what is truth? 'twas Pilate's queſtion, put
To Truth itſelf, that deign'd him no reply.
And wherefore? will not God impart his light
To them that aſk it?—Freely—'tis his joy,

His glory, and his nature, to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, inſincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a ſpark.
What's that which brings contempt upon a book,
And him who writes it; though the ſtyle be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact?
That makes a miniſter in holy things
The joy of many, and the dread of more,
His name a theme for praiſe and for reproach?—
That, while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up;
But which the poor, and the deſpis'd of all,
Seek and obtain, and often find unſought?
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.

O, friendly to the beſt purſuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domeſtic life in rural leiſure paſs'd!
Few know thy value, and few taſte thy ſweets;
Though many boaſt thy favours, and affect
To underſtand and chooſe thee for their own.
But fooliſh man foregoes his proper bliſs,

Ev'n as his firſt progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in paradiſe, (for earth has ſtill
Some traces of her youthful beauty left)
Subſtantial happineſs for tranſient joy.
Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurſe
The growing ſeeds of wiſdom; that ſuggeſt,
By ev'ry pleaſing image they preſent,
Reflections ſuch as meliorate the heart,
Compoſe the paſſions, and exalt the mind;
Scenes ſuch as theſe 'tis his ſupreme delight
To fill with riot, and defile with blood.
Should ſome contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We perſecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the ſportſman over hill and dale,
Fearleſs, and rapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fiſh's eye;
Could pageantry and dance, and feaſt and ſong,
Be quell'd in all our ſummer-months' retreat;
How many ſelf-deluded nymphs and ſwains,
Who dream they have a taſte for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurs'ries of the ſpleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none elſe, who ſeek

For their own ſake its ſilence and its ſhade.
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Suſceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultur'd and capable of ſober thought,
For all the ſavage din of the ſwift pack,
And clamours of the field?—Deteſted ſport,
That owes its pleaſures to another's pain;
That feeds upon the ſobs and dying ſhrieks
Of harmleſs nature, dumb, but yet endu'd
With eloquence, that agonies inſpire,
Of ſilent tears and heart-diſtending ſighs?
Vain tears, alas, and ſighs, that never find
A correſponding tone in jovial ſouls!
Well—one at leaſt is ſafe. One ſhelter'd hare
Has never heard the ſanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care
Has made at laſt familiar; ſhe has loſt
Much of her vigilant inſtinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes—thou may'ſt eat thy bread, and lick the hand
That feeds thee; thou may'ſt frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire ſecure

To thy ſtraw couch, and ſlumber unalarm'd;
For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledg'd
All that is human in me to protect
Thine unſuſpecting gratitude and love.
If I ſurvive thee I will dig thy grave;
And, when I place thee in it, ſighing, ſay,
I knew at leaſt one hare that had a friend.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle; and who juſtly, in return,
Eſteems that buſy world an idler too!
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
Delightful induſtry enjoy'd at home,
And nature in her cultivated trim
Dreſs'd to his taſte, inviting him abroad—
Can he want occupation who has theſe?
Will he be idle who has much t' enjoy?
Me, therefore, ſtudious of laborious eaſe,
Not ſlothful; happy to deceive the time,
Not waſte it; and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with uſe,
When He ſhall call his debtors to account
From whom are all our bleſſings; bus'neſs finds
Ev'n here: while ſedulous I ſeek t' improve,

At leaſt neglect not, or leave unemploy'd,
The mind he gave me; driving it, though ſlack
Too oft, and much impeded in its work
By cauſes not to be divulg'd in vain,
To its juſt point—the ſervice of mankind.
He that attends to his interior ſelf,
That has a heart, and keeps it; has a mind
That hungers, and ſupplies it; and who ſeeks
A ſocial, not a diſſipated life;
Has buſineſs; feels himſelf engag'd t' achieve
No unimportant, though a ſilent, taſk.
A life all turbulence and noiſe may ſeem,
To him that leads it, wiſe, and to be prais'd;
But wiſdom is a pearl with moſt ſucceſs
Sought in ſtill water, and beneath clear ſkies.
He that is ever occupied in ſtorms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up inſtead,
Vainly induſtrious, a diſgraceful prize.

The morning finds the ſelf-ſequeſter'd man
Freſh for his taſk, intend what taſk he may.
Whether inclement ſeaſons recommend
His warm but ſimple home, where he enjoys,
With her who ſhares his pleaſures and his heart,

Sweet converſe, ſipping calm the fragrant lymph
Which neatly ſhe prepares; then to his book,
Well choſen, and not ſullenly perus'd
In ſelfiſh ſilence, but imparted oft
As aught occurs that ſhe may ſmile to hear,
Or turn to nouriſhment, digeſted well.
Or, if the garden with its many cares,
All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conſcious how much the hand
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,
Oft loit'ring lazily, if not o'erſeen,
Or miſapplying his unſkilful ſtrength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himſelf. No works indeed
That aſk robuſt tough ſinews, bred to toil,
Servile employ; but ſuch as may amuſe,
Not tire, demanding rather ſkill than force.
Proud of his well-ſpread walls, he views his trees
That meet (no barren interval between)
With pleaſure more than ev'n their fruits afford,
Which, ſave himſelf who trains them, none can feel:
Theſe, therefore, are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may diſcipline the ſhoots,
None but his ſteel approach them. What is weak,

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——— where he enjoys,
With her who shares his pleasures & his heart,
Sweet converse

Diſtemper'd, or has loſt prolific pow'rs,
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife: nor does he ſpare the ſoft
And ſucculent, that feeds its giant growth,
But barren, at th' expence of neighb'ring twigs
Leſs oſtentatious, and yet ſtudded thick
With hopeful gems. The reſt, no portion left
That may diſgrace his art, or diſappoint
Large expectation, he diſpoſes neat
At meaſur'd diſtances, that air and ſun,
Admitted freely, may afford their aid,
And ventilate and warm the ſwelling buds.
Hence ſummer has her riches, autumn hence,
And hence ev'n winter fills his wither'd hand
With bluſhing fruits, and plenty, not his own *.
Fair recompenſe of labour well beſtow'd,
And wiſe precaution; which a clime ſo rude
Makes needful ſtill, whoſe ſpring is but the child
Of churliſh winter, in her froward moods
Diſcov'ring much the temper of her ſire.
For oft, as if in her the ſtream of mild
Maternal nature had revers'd its courſe,

* Miraturque novos fructus et non ſua poma. VIRG.

She brings her infants forth with many ſmiles;
But, once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.
He, therefore, timely warn'd, himſelf ſupplies
Her want of care, ſcreening and keeping warm
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blaſt may ſweep
His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
As the ſun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,
The fence withdrawn, he gives them ev'ry beam,
And ſpreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raiſe the prickly and green-coated gourd,
So grateful to the palate, and when rare
So coveted, elſe baſe and diſeſteem'd—
Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
That toiling ages have but juſt matur'd,
And at this moment unaſſay'd in ſong.
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long ſince,
Their eulogy; thoſe ſang the Mantuan bard,
And theſe the Grecian, in ennobling ſtrains;
And in thy numbers, Phillips, ſhines for aye
The ſolitary ſhilling. Pardon then,
Ye ſage diſpenſers of poetic fame,
Th' ambition of one, meaner far, whoſe pow'rs,
Preſuming an attempt not leſs ſublime,

Pant for the praiſe of dreſſing to the taſte
Of critic appetite, no ſordid fare,
A cucumber, while coſtly yet and ſcarce.

The ſtable yields a ſtercoraceous heap,
Impregnated with quick fermenting ſalts,
And potent to reſiſt the freezing blaſt:
For, ere the beech and elm have caſt their leaf
Deciduous, when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Expos'd to his cold breath, the taſk begins.
Warily, therefore, and with prudent heed,
He ſeeks a favour'd ſpot; that where he builds
Th' agglomerated pile his frame may front
The ſun's meridian diſk, and at the back
Enjoy cloſe ſhelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. Firſt he bids ſpread
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
Th' aſcending damps; then leiſurely impoſe,
And lightly, ſhaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the ſaturated ſtraw.
What longeſt binds the cloſeſt forms ſecure
The ſhapely ſide, that as it riſes takes,
By juſt degrees, an overhanging breadth,

Shelt'ring the baſe with its projected eaves:
Th' uplifted frame, compact at ev'ry joint,
And overlaid with clear tranſlucent glaſs,
He ſettles next upon the ſloping mount,
Whoſe ſharp declivity ſhoots off ſecure
From the daſh'd pane the deluge as it falls.
He ſhuts it cloſe, and the firſt labour ends.
Thrice muſt the voluble and reſtleſs earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
Slow gathering in the midſt, through the ſquare maſs
Diffus'd, attain the ſurface: when, behold!
A peſtilent and moſt corroſive ſteam,
Like a groſs fog Bœotian, riſing faſt,
And faſt condens'd upon the dewy ſaſh,
Aſks egreſs; which obtain'd, the overcharg'd
And drench'd conſervatory, breathes abroad,
In volumes wheeling ſlow, the vapour dank;
And, purified, rejoices to have loſt
Its foul inhabitant. But to aſſuage
Th' impatient fervour which it firſt conceives
Within its reeking boſom, threat'ning death
To his young hopes, requires diſcreet delay.
Experience, ſlow preceptreſs, teaching oft
The way to glory by miſcarriage foul,

Muſt prompt him, and admoniſh how to catch
Th' auſpicious moment, when the temper'd heat,
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fomentation, and invite the ſeed.
The ſeed, ſelected wiſely, plump, and ſmooth,
And gloſſy, he commits to pots of ſize
Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepar'd
And fruitful ſoil, that has been treaſur'd long,
And drank no moiſture from the dripping clouds:
Theſe on the warm and genial earth, that hides
The ſmoking manure that o'erſpreads it all,
He places lightly, and, as time ſubdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the ſoft medium, till they ſtand immers'd.
Then riſe the tender germs, upſtarting quick,
And ſpreading wide their ſpongy lobes; at firſt
Pale, wan, and livid; but aſſuming ſoon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produc'd, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the ſecond ſtalk
A pimple, that portends a future ſprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence ſtraight ſucceed
The branches, ſturdy to his utmoſt wiſh;

Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
And tranſplantation in an ampler ſpace.
Indulg'd in what they wiſh, they ſoon ſupply
Large foliage, overſhadowing golden flow'rs,
Blown on the ſummit of th' apparent fruit.
Theſe have their ſexes; and, when ſummer ſhines,
The bee tranſports the fertilizing meal
From flow'r to flow'r, and ev'n the breathing air
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed uſe.
Not ſo when winter ſcowls. Aſſiſtant art
Then acts in nature's office, brings to paſs
The glad eſpouſals, and enſures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (ſince luxury muſt have
His dainties, and the world's more num'rous half
Lives by contriving delicates for you)
Grudge not the coſt. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the ſkill,
That day and night are exercis'd, and hang
Upon the tickliſh balance of ſuſpenſe,
That ye may garniſh your profuſe regales
With ſummer fruits brought forth by wintry ſuns.
Ten thouſand dangers lie in wait to thwart

The proceſs. Heat and cold, and wind, and ſteam,
Moiſture and drought, mice, worms, and ſwarming flies,
Minute as duſt, and numberleſs, oft work
Dire diſappointment, that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long, to tell th' expedients and the ſhifts
Which he that fights a ſeaſon ſo ſevere
Deviſes, while he guards his tender truſt;
And oft, at laſt, in vain. The learn'd and wiſe
Sarcaſtic would exclaim, and judge the ſong
Cold as its theme, and, like its theme, the fruit
Of too much labour, worthleſs when produc'd.

Who loves a garden loves a green-houſe too.
Unconſcious of a leſs propitious clime,
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and ſnug,
While the winds whiſtle and the ſnows deſcend.
The ſpiry myrtle with unwith'ring leaf
Shines there, and flouriſhes. The golden boaſt
Of Portugal and weſtern India there,
The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,
Peep through their poliſh'd foliage at the ſtorm,
And ſeem to ſmile at what they need not fear.

Th' amomum there with intermingling flow'rs
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours, and the spangled beau,
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of ev'ry leaf, that can endure
The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite,
Live there, and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these; th' Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraia: foreigners from many lands,
They form one social shade, as if conven'd
By magic summons of th' Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flow'r,
Must lend its aid t' illustrate all their charm,
And dress the regular yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retir'd, but still
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.
So once were rang'd the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;
And so, while Garrick, as renown'd as he,
The sons of Albion; fearing each to lose

Some note of Nature's muſic from his lips,
And covetous of Shakeſpeare's beauty, ſeen
In ev'ry flaſh of his far-beaming eye.
Nor taſte alone and well-contriv'd diſplay
Suffice to give the marſhall'd ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
Unſung, and many cares are yet behind,
And more laborious; cares on which depend
Their vigour, injur'd ſoon, not ſoon reſtor'd.
The ſoil muſt be renew'd, which, often waſh'd,
Loſes its treaſure of ſalubrious ſalts,
And diſappoints the roots; the ſlender roots
Cloſe interwoven, where they meet the vaſe,
Muſt ſmooth be ſhorn away; the ſapleſs branch
Muſt fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
Muſt be detach'd, and where it ſtrews the floor
Swept with a woman's neatneſs, breeding elſe
Contagion, and diſſeminating death.
Diſcharge but theſe kind offices, (and who
Would ſpare, that loves them, offices like theſe?)
Well they reward the toil. The ſight is pleas'd,
The ſcent regal'd, each odorif'rous leaf,
Each op'ning bloſſom, freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its ſweets.

So manifold, all pleaſing in their kind,
All healthful, are th' employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round; ſtill ending, and beginning ſtill.
Nor are theſe all. To deck the ſhapely knoll,
That, ſoftly ſwell'd and gaily dreſs'd, appears
A flow'ry iſland, from the dark green lawn
Emerging, muſt be deem'd a labour due
To no mean hand, and aſks the touch of taſte.
Here alſo grateful mixture of well-match'd
And ſorted hues (each giving each relief,
And by contraſted beauty ſhining more)
Is needful. Strength may wield the pond'rous ſpade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compoſt home;
But elegance, chief grace the garden ſhows,
And moſt attractive, is the fair reſult
Of thought, the creature of a poliſh'd mind.
Without it all is gothic as the ſcene
To which th' inſipid citizen reſorts
Near yonder heath, where induſtry miſpent,
But proud of his uncouth ill-choſen taſk,
Has made a heav'n on earth; with ſuns and moons
Of cloſe cramm'd ſtones has charg'd th' encumber'd
ſoil,

And fairly laid the zodiac in the duſt.
He, therefore, who would ſee his flow'rs diſpos'd
Sightly and in juſt order, ere he gives
The beds the trufted treaſure of their ſeeds,
Forecaſts the future whole; that, when the ſcene
Shall break into its preconceiv'd diſplay,
Each for itſelf, and all as with one voice
Conſpiring, may atteſt his bright deſign.
Nor even then, diſmiſſing as perform'd
His pleaſant work, may he ſuppoſe it done.
Few ſelf-ſupported flow'rs endure the wind
Uninjur'd, but expect th' upholding aid
Of the ſmooth-ſhaven prop, and, neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
For int'reſt ſake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the ſoil that feeds them, far diffus'd
And lowly creeping, modeſt and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving moſt where little ſeen:
Some, more aſpiring, catch the neighbour ſhrub
With claſping tendrils, and inveſt his branch,
Elſe unadorn'd, with many a gay feſtoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompenſing well
The ſtrength they borrow with the grace they lend.
All hate the rank ſociety of weeds,

Noiſome, and ever greedy to exhauſt
Th' impoveriſh'd earth; an overbearing race,
That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
Diſturb good order, and degrade true worth.

Oh, bleſt ſecluſion from a jarring world,
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man reſtore
Loſt innocence, or cancel follies paſt;
But it has peace, and much ſecures the mind
From all aſſaults of evil; proving ſtill
A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with eaſe
By vicious cuſtom, raging uncontroll'd
Abroad, and deſolating public life.
When fierce temptation, ſeconded within
By traitor appetite, and arm'd with darts
Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breaſt,
To combat may be glorious, and ſucceſs
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is ſafe.
Had I the choice of ſublunary good,
What could I wiſh that I poſſeſs not here?
Health, leiſure, means t' improve it, friendſhip, peace,
No looſe or wanton, though a wand'ring, muſe,

And conſtant occupation without care.
Thus bleſt, I draw a picture of that bliſs;
Hopeleſs, indeed, that diſſipated minds,
And profligate abuſers of a world
Created fair ſo much in vain for them,
Should ſeek the guiltleſs joys that I deſcribe,
Allur'd by my report: but ſure no leſs,
That, ſelf-condemn'd, they muſt neglect the prize,
And what they will not taſte muſt yet approve.
What we admire we praiſe; and, when we praiſe,
Advance it into notice, that, its worth
Acknowledg'd, others may admire it too.
I therefore recommend, though at the riſk
Of popular diſguſt, yet boldly ſtill,
The cauſe of piety and ſacred truth,
And virtue, and thoſe ſcenes which God ordain'd
Should beſt ſecure them and promote them moſt;
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forſaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
Pure is the nymph, though lib'ral of her ſmiles,
And chaſte, though unconfin'd, whom I extol.
Not as the prince in Shuſhan, when he call'd,
Vain-glorious of her charms, his Vaſhti forth
To grace the full pavilion. His deſign

Was but to boaſt his own peculiar good,
Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my ſweets,
And ſhe that ſweetens all my bitters too,
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whoſe form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and find raptures ſtill renew'd,
Is free to all men—univerſal prize.
Strange that ſo fair a creature ſhould yet want
Admirers, and be deſtin'd to divide
With meaner objects ev'n the few ſhe finds!
Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flow'rs,
She loſes all her influence. Cities then
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines,
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholeſome airs, though unperfum'd
By roſes; and clear ſuns, though ſcarcely felt;
And groves, if unharmonious, yet ſecure
From clamour, and whoſe very ſilence charms;
To be preferr'd to ſmoke, to the eclipſe
That Metropolitan volcanos make,
Whoſe Stygian throats breathe darkneſs all day long;
And to the ſtir of commerce, driving ſlow,

And thund'ring loud, with his ten thousand wheels!
They would be, were not madness in the head,
And folly in the heart; were England now
What England was; plain, hospitable, kind,
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of those better days,
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
Knew their own masters; and laborious hinds,
Who had survived the father, serv'd the son.
Now the legitimate and rightful lord
Is but a transient guest, newly arriv'd,
And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
Estates are landscapes, gaz'd upon a while,
Then advertis'd, and auctioneer'd away.
The country starves, and they that feed th' o'ercharg'd
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
The wings that waft our riches out of sight
Grow on the gamester's elbows; and th' alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints,

That never tire, ſoon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes!
Th' omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!
Down falls the venerable pile, th' abode
Of our forefathers—a grave whiſker'd race,
But taſteleſs. Springs a palace in its ſtead,
But in a diſtant ſpot; where, more expos'd,
It may enjoy th' advantage of the north,
And aguiſh eaſt, till time ſhall have transform'd
Thoſe naked acres to a ſhelt'ring grove.
He ſpeaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn;
Woods vaniſh, hills ſubſide, and vallies riſe:
And ſtreams, as if created for his uſe,
Purſue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or ſtraight, now rapid and now ſlow,
Now murm'ring ſoft, now roaring in caſcades—
Ev'n as he bids! Th' enraptur'd owner ſmiles.
'Tis finiſh'd, and yet, finiſh'd as it ſeems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliеſt it could ſhow,
A mine to ſatisfy th' enormous coſt.
Drain'd to the laſt poor item of his wealth,
He ſighs, departs, and leaves th' accompliſh'd plan
That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day

Labour'd, and many a night purſu'd in dreams,
Juſt when it meets his hopes, and proves the heav'n
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy!
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,
When, having no ſtake left, no pledge t' endear
Her int'reſts, or that gives her ſacred cauſe
A moment's operation on his love,
He burns with moſt intenſe and flagrant zeal
To ſerve his country. Miniſterial grace
Deals him out money from the public cheſt;
Or, if that mine be ſhut, ſome private purſe
Supplies his need with an uſurious loan,
To be refunded duly when his vote,
Well-manag'd, ſhall have earn'd its worthy price.
Oh innocent, compar'd with arts like theſe,
Crape, and cock'd piſtol, and the whiſtling ball
Sent through the trav'ller's temples! He that finds
One drop of heav'n's ſweet mercy in his cup,
Can dig, beg, rot, and periſh, well content,
So he may wrap himſelf in honeſt rags
At his laſt gaſp; but could not for a world
Fiſh up his dirty and dependent bread
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
Sordid and ſick'ning at his own ſucceſs.

Ambition, av'rice, penury incurr'd
By endleſs riot, vanity, the luſt
Of pleaſure and variety, diſpatch,
As duly as the ſwallows diſappear,
The world of wand'ring knights and ſquires to town.
London ingulphs them all! The ſhark is there,
And the ſhark's prey; the ſpendthrift, and the leech
That ſucks him. There the ſycophant, and he
Who, with bare-headed and obſequious bows,
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail
And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
The levee ſwarms, as if, in golden pomp,
Were character'd on ev'ry ſtateſman's door,
"BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED
HERE."
Theſe are the charms that ſully and eclipſe
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
That lean hard-handed poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wiſh to ſhine, the thirſt to be amus'd,
That at the ſound of winter's hoary wing
Unpeople all our countries of ſuch herds
Of flutt'ring, loit'ring, cringing, begging, looſe
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vaſt
And boundleſs as it is, a crowded coop.

Oh thou, reſort and mart of all the earth,
Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,
And ſpotted with all crimes; in whom I ſee
Much that I love, and more that I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
That pleaſeſt and yet ſhock'ſt me, I can laugh
And I can weep, can hope, and can deſpond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have ſav'd a city once,
And thou haſt many righteous.—Well for thee—
That ſalt preſerves thee; more corrupted elſe,
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour
Than Sodom in her day had pow'r to be,
For whom God heard his Abr'am plead in vain.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK IV.

## ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

*The poſt comes in.—The news-paper is read.—The world contemplated at a diſtance.—Addreſs to Winter.—The rural amuſements of a winter evening compared with the faſhionable ones.—Addreſs to evening.—A brown ſtudy.—Fall of ſnow in the evening.—The waggoner.—A poor family-piece.—The rural thief.—Public houſes.—The multitude of them cenſured.—The farmer's daughter: what ſhe was—what ſhe is.—The ſimplicity of country manners almoſt loſt.—Cauſes of the change.—Deſertion of the country by the rich.—Neglect of magiſtrates.—The militia principally in fault.—The new recruit and his transformation.—Reflection on bodies corporate.—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguiſhed.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK IV.

## THE WINTER EVENING.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearifome but needful length
Beſtrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—
He comes, the herald of a noiſy world,
With ſpatter'd boots, ſtrapp'd waiſt, and frozen locks;
News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.
True to his charge, the cloſe pack'd load behind,
Yet careleſs what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the deſtin'd inn;
And, having dropp'd th' expected bag, paſs on.
He whiſtles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,

Cold and yet cheerful: meſſenger of grief
Perhaps to thouſands, and of joy to ſome;
To him indiff'rent whether grief or joy.
Houſes in aſhes, and the fall of ſtocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epiſtles wet
With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Faſt as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charg'd with am'rous ſighs of abſent ſwains,
Or nymphs reſponſive, equally affect
His horſe and him, unconſcious of them all.
But oh th' important budget! uſher'd in
With ſuch heart-ſhaking muſic, who can ſay
What are its tidings? Have our troops awak'd?
Or do they ſtill, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does ſhe wear her plum'd
And jewell'd turban with a ſmile of peace,
Or do we grind her ſtill? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wiſdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to ſet th' impriſon'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utt'rance once again.

Stothard Del. Published Feb 1. 1798 by J Johnson London. Heath Sculp.

*Now stir the fire, & close the Shutters fast,*
*Let fall the Curtains, wheel the Sofa round,*

Now ſtir the fire, and cloſe the ſhutters faſt,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the ſofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud hiſſing urn
Throws up a ſteamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.
Not ſuch his ev'ning, who with ſhining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, ſqueez'd
And bor'd with elbow points through both his ſides,
Out-ſcolds the ranting actor on the ſtage:
Nor his, who patient ſtands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots, burſting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and ſmiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not ev'n critics criticiſe; that holds
Inquiſitive attention, while I read,
Faſt bound in chains of ſilence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themſelves, yet fear to break;
What is it, but a map of buſy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vaſt concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts ambition. On the ſummit ſee
The ſeals of office glitter in his eyes;

He climbs, he pants, he graſps them! At his heels,
Cloſe at his heels, a demagogue aſcends,
And with a dextrous jerk ſoon twiſts him down,
And wins them, but to loſe them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in ſoft
Meanders lubricate the courſe they take;
The modeſt ſpeaker is aſham'd and griev'd
T' engroſs a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet baſhfulneſs! it claims at leaſt this praiſe;
The dearth of information and good ſenſe
That it foretells us always comes to paſs.
Cat'racts of declamation thunder here;
There foreſts of no meaning ſpread the page,
In which all comprehenſion wanders, loſt;
While fields of pleaſantry amuſe us there
With merry deſcants on a nation's woes.
The reſt appears a wilderneſs of ſtrange
But gay confuſion; roſes for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothleſs, ringlets for the bald,
Heav'n, earth, and ocean, plunder'd of their ſweets,
Nectareous eſſences, Olympian dews,

Sermons, and city feaſts, and fav'rite airs,
Æthereal journies, ſubmarine exploits,
And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.

'Tis pleaſant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at ſuch a world; to ſee the ſtir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar ſhe ſends through all her gates
At a ſafe diſtance, where the dying ſound
Falls a ſoft murmur on th' uninjur'd ear.
Thus ſitting, and ſurveying thus at eaſe
The globe and its concerns, I ſeem advanc'd
To ſome ſecure and more than mortal height,
That lib'rates and exempts me from them all.
It turns ſubmitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult, and am ſtill. The ſound of war
Has loſt its terrors ere it reaches me;
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And av'rice that make man a wolf to man;
Hear the faint echo of thoſe brazen throats
By which he ſpeaks the language of his heart,
And ſigh, but never tremble at the ſound.

He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flow'r to flow'r, ſo he from land to land;
The manners, cuſtoms, policy, of all
Pay contribution to the ſtore he gleans;
He ſucks intelligence in ev'ry clime,
And ſpreads the honey of his deep reſearch
At his return—a rich repaſt for me.
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Aſcend his topmaſt, through his peering eyes
Diſcover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and ſhare in his eſcapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is ſtill at home.

Oh Winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
Thy ſcatter'd hair with ſleet like aſhes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fring'd with a beard made white with other ſnows
Than thoſe of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafleſs branch thy ſceptre, and thy throne
A ſliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urg'd by ſtorms along its ſlipp'ry way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou ſeem'ſt,
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'ſt the ſun

A pris'ner in the yet undawning eaſt,
Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his ſtay,
Down to the roſy weſt; but kindly ſtill
Compenſating his loſs with added hours
Of ſocial converſe and inſtructive eaſe,
And gath'ring, at ſhort notice, in one group
The family diſpers'd, and fixing thought,
Not leſs diſpers'd by day-light and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fire-ſide enjoyments, home-born happineſs,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undiſturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted ev'ning, know.
No rattling wheels ſtop ſhort before theſe gates;
No powder'd pert proficient in the art
Of ſounding an alarm, aſſaults theſe doors
Till the ſtreet rings; no ſtationary ſteeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedleſs of the ſound,
The ſilent circle fan themſelves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its buſy taſk,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
Wrought patiently into the ſnowy lawn,
Unfolds its boſom; buds, and leaves, and ſprigs,

And curling tendrils, gracefully diſpos'd,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath that cannot fade, of flow'rs that blow
With moſt ſucceſs when all beſides decay.
The poet's or hiſtorian's page, by one
Made vocal for th' amuſement of the reſt;
The ſprightly lyre, whoſe treaſure of ſweet ſounds
The touch from many a trembling chord ſhakes out;
And the clear voice ſymphonious, yet diſtinct,
And in the charming ſtrife triumphant ſtill;
Beguile the night, and ſet a keener edge
On female induſtry: the threaded ſteel
Flies ſwiftly, and, unfelt, the taſk proceeds.
The volume clos'd, the cuſtomary rites
Of the laſt meal commence. A Roman meal;
Such as the miſtreſs of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domeſtic ſhade,
Enjoy'd—ſpare feaſt!—a radiſh and an egg!
Diſcourſe enſues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor ſuch as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proſcribes the ſound of mirth:

Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his awful name, or deem his praiſe
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with mem'ry's pointing wand,
That calls the paſt to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'ſcap'd, the broken ſnare,
The diſappointed foe, deliv'rance found
Unlook'd for, life preſerv'd and peace reſtor'd—
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
Oh ev'nings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd
The ſabine bard. Oh ev'nings, I reply,
More to be priz'd and coveted than your's,
As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,
That I, and mine, and thoſe we love, enjoy.

Is winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the ſmoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unfav'ry throng,
To thaw him into feeling; or the ſmart
And ſnappiſh dialogue, that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a ſmile?

The ſelf complacent actor, when he views
(Stealing a ſide-long glance at a full houſe)
The ſlope of faces, from the floor to th' roof,
(As if one maſter-ſpring controul'd them all)
Relax'd into an univerſal grin,
Sees not a count'nance there that ſpeaks of joy
Half ſo refin'd or ſo ſincere as our's.
Cards were ſuperfluous here, with all the tricks
That idleneſs has ever yet contriv'd
To fill the void of an unfurniſh'd brain,
To palliate dulneſs, and give time a ſhove.
Time, as he paſſes us, has a dove's wing,
Unſoil'd, and ſwift, and of a ſilken ſound;
But the world's time is time in maſquerade!
Their's, ſhould I paint him, has his pinions fledg'd
With motley plumes; and, where the peacock ſhows
His azure eyes, is tinctur'd black and red
With ſpots quadrangular of di'mond form,
Enſanguin'd hearts, clubs typical of ſtrife,
And ſpades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What ſhould be and what was an hour-glaſs once,
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard maſt
Well does the work of his deſtructive ſcythe.
Thus deck'd, he charms a world whom faſhion blinds

To his true worth, moſt pleas'd when idle moſt;
Whoſe only happy are their waſted hours.
Ev'n miſſes, at whoſe age their mothers wore
The back-ſtring and the bib, aſſume the dreſs
Of womanhood, fit pupils in the ſchool
Of card-devoted time, and, night by night,
Plac'd at ſome vacant corner of the board,
Learn ev'ry trick, and ſoon play all the game.
But truce with cenſure. Roving as I rove,
Where ſhall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he that travels far oft turns aſide
To view ſome rugged rock or mould'ring tow'r,
Which, ſeen, delights him not; then, coming home,
Deſcribes and prints it, that the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth;
So I, with bruſh in hand and pallet ſpread,
With colours mix'd for a far diff'rent uſe,
Paint cards and dolls, and ev'ry idle thing
That fancy finds in her excurſive flights.

Come, Ev'ning, once again, ſeaſon of peace;
Return, ſweet Ev'ning, and continue long!
Methinks I ſee thee in the ſtreaky weſt,
With matron-ſtep ſlow-moving, while the night

Treads on thy ſweeping train; one hand employ'd
In letting fall the curtain of repoſe
On bird and beaſt, the other charg'd for man
With ſweet oblivion of the cares of day:
Not ſumptuouſly adorn'd, nor needing aid,
Like homely featur'd night, of cluſt'ring gems;
A ſtar or two, juſt twinkling on thy brow,
Suffices thee; ſave that the moon is thine
No leſs than her's, not worn indeed on high
With oſtentatious pageantry, but ſet
With modeſt grandeur in thy purple zone,
Reſplendent leſs, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou ſhalt find thy vot'ry calm,
Or make me ſo. Compoſure is thy gift:
And, whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to muſic, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining ſilken threads round iv'ry reels,
When they command whom man was born to pleaſe;
I ſlight thee not, but make thee welcome ſtill.

Juſt when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,

Goliath, might have ſeen his giant bulk
Whole, without ſtooping, tow'ring creſt and all,
My pleaſures, too, begin. But me, perhaps,
The glowing hearth may ſatisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The ſhadow to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quiv'ring flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So ſpent in parlour twilight: ſuch a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with ſome new theme
Pregnant, or indiſpos'd alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boaſt your more mercurial pow'rs,
That never feel a ſtupor, know no pauſe,
Nor need one; I am conſcious, and confeſs,
Fearleſs, a ſoul that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houſes, tow'rs,
Trees, churches, and ſtrange viſages, expreſs'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gaz'd, myſelf creating what I ſaw.
Nor leſs amus'd have I quieſcent watch'd
The ſooty films that play upon the bars,
Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view

Of ſuperſtition, propheſying ſtill,
Though ſtill deceiv'd, ſome ſtranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the underſtanding takes repoſe
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And ſleeps and is refreſh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a maſk
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were taſk'd to his full ſtrength, abſorb'd and loſt.
Thus oft, reclin'd at eaſe, I loſe an hour
At ev'ning, till at length the freezing blaſt,
That ſweeps the bolted ſhutter, ſummons home
The recollected pow'rs; and, ſnapping ſhort
The glaſſy threads, with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toys, reſtores me to myſelf.
How calm is my receſs; and how the froſt,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The ſilence and the warmth enjoy'd within!
I ſaw the woods and fields, at cloſe of day,
A variegated ſhow; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately wav'd
The golden harveſt, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd ſo lately by the forceful ſhare.
I ſaw far off the weedy fallows ſmile
With verdure not unprofitable, graz'd

By flocks, faſt feeding, and ſelecting each
His fav'rite herb; while all the leafleſs groves,
That ſkirt th' horizon, wore a ſable hue,
Scarce notic'd in the kindred duſk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though ſilently perform'd,
And ſlowly, and by moſt unfelt, the face
Of univerſal nature undergoes.
Faſt falls a fleecy ſhow'r: the downy flakes,
Deſcending, and with never-ceaſing lapſe,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Aſſimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thick'ning mantle; and the green
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blaſt,
Eſcapes unhurt beneath ſo warm a veil.

In ſuch a world; ſo thorny, and where none
Finds happineſs unblighted; or, if found,
Without ſome thriftly ſorrow at its ſide;
It ſeems the part of wiſdom, and no ſin
Againſt the law of love, to meaſure lots
With leſs diſtinguiſh'd than ourſelves; that thus
We may with patience bear our mod'rate ills,
And ſympathiſe with others, ſuff'ring more.

Ill fares the trav'ller now, and he that ſtalks
In pond'rous boots beſide his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded ſore
By congregated loads adhering cloſe
To the clogg'd wheels; and in its ſluggiſh pace,
Noiſeleſs, appears a moving hill of ſnow.
The toiling ſteeds expand the noſtril wide,
While ev'ry breath, by reſpiration ſtrong
Forc'd downward, is conſolidated ſoon
Upon their jutting cheſts. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempeſtuous night,
With half-ſhut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Preſented bare againſt the ſtorm, plods on.
One hand ſecures his hat, ſave when with both
He brandiſhes his pliant length of whip,
Reſounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy; and, in my account, denied
That ſenſibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!
Thy frame, robuſt and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vig'rous pulſe; and the unhealthful eaſt,
That breathes the ſpleen, and ſearches ev'ry bone

Of the infirm, is wholeſome air to thee.
Thy days roll on, exempt from houſehold care;
Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beaſts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpleſs charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'ſt,
Yet ſhow that thou haſt mercy! which the great,
With needleſs hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would ſeem, not always ſhow.

Poor, yet induſtrious, modeſt, quiet, neat;
Such claim compaſſion in a night like this,
And have a friend in ev'ry feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it laſts, by labour, all day long
They brave the ſeaſon, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad and fed but ſparely, time to cool.
The frugal houſewife trembles when ſhe lights
Her ſcanty ſtock of bruſh-wood, blazing clear,
But dying ſoon, like all terreſtrial joys.
The few ſmall embers left ſhe nurſes well;
And, while her infant race, with outſpread hands
And crowded knees, ſit cow'ring o'er the ſparks,
Retires, content to quake, ſo they be warm'd.
The man feels leaſt, as more inur'd than ſhe

To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly mov'd by his severer toil;
Yet he, too, finds his own distress in their's.
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I save
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declin'd, and the brown loaf
Lodg'd on the shelf, half eaten, without sauce
Of sav'ry cheese, or butter, costlier still;
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas,
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few!
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious parsimony takes but just
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
Skillet, and old carv'd chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands; but other boast have none
To sooth their honest pride, that scorns to beg,
Nor comfort elfe, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs

Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of diſtribution; lib'ral of their aid
To clam'rous importunity in rags,
But oft-times deaf to ſuppliants, who would bluſh
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarſe,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth:
Theſe aſk with painful ſhyneſs, and, refus'd
Becauſe deſerving, ſilently retire!
But be ye of good courage! Time itſelf
Shall much befriend you. Time ſhall give increaſe;
And all your num'rous progeny, well-train'd,
But helpleſs, in few years ſhall find their hands,
And labour too. Meanwhile ye ſhall not want
What, conſcious of your virtues, we can ſpare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourſelves may ſend.
I mean the man, who, when the diſtant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.

But poverty, with moſt who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is ſelf-inflicted woe;
Th' effect of lazineſs or ſottiſh waſte.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much ſolicitous how beſt
He may compenſate for a day of ſloth

By works of darkneſs and nocturnal wrong.
Woe to the gard'ner's pale, the farmer's hedge,
Plaſh'd neatly, and ſecur'd with driven ſtakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by ſtrength,
Reſiſtleſs in ſo bad a cauſe, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the ſpoil—
An aſs's burden—and, when laden moſt
And heavieſt, light of foot, ſteals faſt away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-ſtack'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrench'd the door, however well ſecur'd,
Where Chanticleer amidſt his haram ſleeps
In unſuſpecting pomp. Twitch'd from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, ſtruggling in vain,
And loudly wond'ring at the ſudden change.—
Nor this to feed his own! 'Twere ſome excuſe
Did pity of their ſuff'rings warp aſide
His principle, and tempt him into ſin
For their ſupport, ſo deſtitute.—But they
Neglected pine at home! themſelves, as more
Expos'd than others, with leſs ſcruple made
His victims, robb'd of their defenceleſs all.

Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchleſs thirſt
Of ruinous ebriety that prompts
His ev'ry action, and imbrutes the man.
Oh for a law to nooſe the villain's neck
Who ſtarves his own; who perſecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has ſworn to love!

Paſs where we may, through city or through town,
Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggar'd, ev'ry twentieth pace
Conducts th' unguarded noſe to ſuch a whiff
Of ſtale debauch, forth-iſſuing from the ſtyes
That law has licens'd, as makes temp'rance reel.
There ſit, involv'd and loſt in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom: the craftſman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the ſhears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk! The fiddle ſcreams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd
Its waſted tones and harmony unheard:
Fierce the diſpute, whate'er the theme; while ſhe,

Fell Diſcord, arbitreſs of ſuch debate,
Perch'd on the ſign-poſt, holds with even hand
Her undeciſive ſcales. In this ſhe lays
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride;
And ſmiles, delighted with th' eternal poiſe.
Dire is the frequent curſe, and its twin ſound
The cheek-diſtending oath, not to be prais'd
As ornamental, muſical, polite,
Like thoſe which modern ſenators employ,
Whoſe oath is rhet'ric, and who ſwear for fame!
Behold the ſchools in which plebeian minds,
Once ſimple, are initiated in arts,
Which ſome may practiſe with politer grace,
But none with readier ſkill!—'tis here they learn
The road that leads, from competence and peace,
To indigence and rapine; till at laſt
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and caſts them out.
But cenſure profits little: vain th' attempt
To advertiſe in verſe a public peſt,
That, like the filth with which the peaſant feeds
His hungry acres, ſtinks, and is of uſe.
Th' exciſe is fatten'd with the rich reſult
Of all this riot; and ten thouſand caſks,

For ever dribbling out their baſe contents,
Touch'd by the Midas finger of the ſtate,
Bleed gold for miniſters to ſport away.
Drink, and be mad, then; 'tis your country bids!
Glorioufly drunk, obey th' important call!
Her cauſe demands th' aſſiſtance of your throats;—
Ye all can ſwallow, and ſhe aſks no more.

Would I had fall'n upon thoſe happier days
That poets celebrate; thoſe golden times,
And thoſe Arcadian ſcenes, that Maro ſings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic proſe.
Nymphs were Dianas then, and ſwains had hearts
That felt their virtues: innocence, it ſeems,
From courts diſmiſs'd, found ſhelter in the groves;
The footſteps of ſimplicity, impreſs'd
Upon the yielding herbage, (ſo they ſing)
Then were not all effac'd: then ſpeech profane,
And manners profligate, were rarely found;
Obſerv'd as prodigies, and ſoon reclaim'd.
Vain wiſh! thoſe days were never: airy dreams
Sat for the picture; and the poet's hand,
Imparting ſubſtance to an empty ſhade,
Impos'd a gay delirium for a truth.

Grant it:—I ſtill muſt envy them an age
That favour'd ſuch a dream; in days like theſe
Impoſſible, when virtue is ſo ſcarce,
That to ſuppoſe a ſcene where ſhe preſides,
Is tramontane, and ſtumbles all belief.
No: we are poliſh'd now! the rural laſs,
Whom once her virgin modeſty and grace,
Her artleſs manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that ſhe was hardly leſs
Than the fair ſhepherdeſs of old romance,
Is ſeen no more. The character is loſt!
Her head, adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft,
And ribbands ſtreaming gay, ſuperbly rais'd,
And magnified beyond all human ſize,
Indebted to ſome ſmart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the treſſes it ſuſtains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tott'ring form
Ill propp'd upon French heels, ſhe might be deem'd
(But that the baſket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy work, or ſale of eggs.
Expect her ſoon with foot-boy at her heels,
No longer bluſhing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care!

The town has ting'd the country; and the ſtain
Appears a ſpot upon a veſtal's robe,
The worſe for what it ſoils. The faſhion runs
Down into ſcenes ſtill rural; but, alas,
Scenes rarely grac'd with rural manners now!
Time was when, in the paſtoral retreat,
Th' unguarded door was ſafe; men did not watch
T' invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then ſleep was undiſturb'd by fear, unſcar'd
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unſuſpicious nights,
And ſlumbers unalarm'd! Now, ere you ſleep,
See that your poliſh'd arms be prim'd with care,
And drop the night-bolt;—ruffians are abroad;
And the firſt larum of the cock's ſhrill throat
May prove a trumpet, ſummoning your ear
To horrid ſounds of hoſtile feet within.
Ev'n day-light has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathleſs waſtes and woods, unconſcious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds,
Or harmleſs flocks, is hazardous and bold.

Lamented change! to which full many a cauſe
Invet'rate, hopeleſs of a cure, conſpires.
The courſe of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worſe, is fatal, never fails.
Increaſe of pow'r begets increaſe of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury exceſs;
Exceſs, the ſcrofulous and itchy plague
That ſeizes firſt the opulent, deſcends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated ſcale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The licenſe of the loweſt in degree,
Deſert their office; and themſelves, intent
On pleaſure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawleſs hands
Reſign the ſcenes their preſence might protect.
Authority herſelf not ſeldom ſleeps,
Though reſident, and witneſs of the wrong.
The plump convivial parſon often bears
The magiſterial ſword in vain, and lays
His rev'rence and his worſhip both to reſt
On the ſame cuſhion of habitual ſloth.
Perhaps timidity reſtrains his arm;

When he ſhould ſtrike he trembles, and ſets free,
Himſelf enſlav'd by terror of the band,
Th' audacious convict whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profeſſion ghoſtly pure,
He too may have his vice, and ſometimes prove
Leſs dainty than becomes his grave outſide
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean—
But here and there an ugly ſmutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touch'd
Corruption! Whoſo ſeeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fiſh,
Wild-fowl or ven'ſon; and his errand ſpeeds.

But faſter far, and more than all the reſt,
A noble cauſe, which none who bears a ſpark
Of public virtue ever wiſh'd remov'd,
Works the deplor'd and miſchievous effect.
'Tis univerſal ſoldierſhip has ſtabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner claſs.
Arms, through the vanity and brainleſs rage
Of thoſe that bear them, in whatever cauſe,
Seem moſt at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with ſerious thought.

The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Bleſt with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own ſimple pleaſures; now and then
A wreſtling-match, a foot-race, or a fair;
Is ballotted, and trembles at the news:
Sheepiſh he doffs his hat, and, mumbling, ſwears
A bible-oath to be whate'er they pleaſe,
To do he knows not what! The taſk perform'd,
That inſtant he becomes the ſerjeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jeſt.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round ſhoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curſe. By ſlow degrees,
Unapt to learn, and form'd of ſtubborn ſtuff,
He yet by ſlow degrees puts off himſelf,
Grows conſcious of a change, and likes it well:
He ſtands erect; his ſlouch becomes a walk;
He ſteps right onward, martial in his air,
His form, and movement; is as ſmart above
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
His hat, or his plum'd helmet, with a grace;
And, his three years of herofhip expir'd,
Returns indignant to the ſlighted plough.
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum

Attends him; drives his cattle to a march;
And ſighs for the ſmart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumſy port the wretch has loſt
His ignorance and harmleſs manners too!
To ſwear, to game, to drink; to ſhow at home,
By lewdneſs, idleneſs, and ſabbath-breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad;
T' aſtoniſh and to grieve his gazing friends;
To break ſome maiden's and his mother's heart;
To be a peſt where he was uſeful once;
Are his ſole aim, and all his glory, now!

Man in ſociety is like a flow'r
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
Shine out; there only reach their proper uſe.
But man, aſſociated and leagu'd with man
By regal warrant, or ſelf-join'd by bond
For int'reſt-ſake, or ſwarming into clans
Beneath one head for purpoſes of war,
Like flow'rs ſelected from the reſt, and bound
And bundled cloſe to fill ſome crowded vaſe,
Fades rapidly, and, by compreſſion marr'd,

Contracts defilement not to be endur'd.
Hence charter'd boroughs are ſuch public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combin'd,
Become a loathſome body, only fit
For diſſolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of ſin
Againſt the charities of domeſtic life,
Incorporated, ſeem at once to loſe
Their nature; and, diſclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the ſword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial juſtice red.
Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world
Miſdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majeſty of thund'ring pomp,
Enchanting muſic and immortal wreaths,
Is but a ſchool where thoughtleſsneſs is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for ev'ry vice.

But, ſlighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which ſtill I more regret,

Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me ſtill.
I never fram'd a wiſh, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliſs,
But there I laid the ſcene. There early ſtray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural; rural, too,
The firſt-born efforts of my youthful muſe,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was miſtreſs of their pow'rs.
No bard could pleaſe me but whoſe lyre was tun'd
To Nature's praiſes. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, aſſembling, as he ſang,
The ruſtic throng beneath his fav'rite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taſte, his Paradiſe ſurpaſs'd
The ſtruggling efforts of my boyiſh tongue
To ſpeak its excellence. I danc'd for joy.
I marvel'd much that at ſo ripe an age
As twice ſev'n years, his beauties had then firſt
Engag'd my wonder; and, admiring ſtill,
And ſtill admiring, with regret ſuppos'd

The joy half loſt becauſe not ſooner found.
There, too, enamour'd of the life I lov'd,
Pathetic in its praiſe, in its purſuit
Determin'd, and poſſeſſing it at laſt
With tranſports ſuch as favour'd lovers feel,
I ſtudied, priz'd, and wiſh'd that I had known,
Ingenious Cowley! and, though now reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taſte,
I cannot but lament thy ſplendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the ſchools.
I ſtill revere thee, courtly though retir'd;
Though ſtretch'd at eaſe in Chertſey's ſilent bow'rs,
Not unemploy'd; and finding rich amends
For a loſt world in ſolitude and verſe.
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound man,
Infus'd at the creation of the kind.
And, though th' Almighty Maker has throughout
Diſcriminated each from each, by ſtrokes
And touches of his hand, with ſo much art
Diverſified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all diſcern a beauty in his works,
And all can taſte them: minds that have been form'd

And tutor'd, with a reliſh more exact,
But none without ſome reliſh, none unmov'd.
It is a flame that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it: neither buſineſs, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city-life;
Whatever elſe they ſmother of true worth
In human boſoms; quench it, or abate.
The villas with which London ſtands begirt,
Like a ſwarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadult'rate air,
The glimpſe of a green paſture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Ev'n in the ſtifling boſom of the town,
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
That ſoothe the rich poſſeſſor; much conſol'd,
That here and there ſome ſprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightſhade, or valerian, grace the well
He cultivates. Theſe ſerve him with a hint
That Nature lives; that ſight-refreſhing green
Is ſtill the liv'ry ſhe delights to wear,
Though ſickly ſamples of th' exub'rant whole.
What are the caſements lin'd with creeping herbs,
The prouder faſhes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,

The Frenchman's *darling? are they not all proofs
That man, immur'd in cities, ſtill retains
His inborn inextinguiſhable thirſt
Of rural ſcenes, compenſating his loſs
By ſupplemental ſhifts, the beſt he may?
The moſt unfurniſh'd with the means of life,
And they that never paſs their brick-wall bounds
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning inſtinct: over head
Suſpend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
And water'd duly. There the pitcher ſtands
A fragment, and the ſpoutleſs tea-pot there;
Sad witneſſes how cloſe-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroneſs of health, and eaſe,
And contemplation, heart-conſoling joys
And harmleſs pleaſures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown! hail, rural life!
Addreſs himſelf who will to the purſuit
Of honours, or emoluments, or fame;

* Mignonette.

I ſhall not add myſelf to ſuch a chaſe,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his ſucceſs.
Some muſt be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to ev'ry man
The virtue, temper, underſtanding, taſte,
That lifts him into life; and lets him fall
Juſt in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.
To the deliv'rer of an injur'd land
He gives a tongue t' enlarge upon, an heart
To feel, and courage to redreſs her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity; to judges ſenſe;
To artiſts ingenuity and ſkill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wiſh for eaſe and leiſure, and ere long
Found here that leiſure and that eaſe I wiſh'd.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK V.

## ARGUMENT OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

*A frosty morning.—The foddering of cattle.—The woodman and his dog.—The poultry.—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall.—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice.—Amusements of monarchs.—War, one of them.—Wars, whence.—And whence monarchy.—The evils of it.—English and French loyalty contrasted.—The Bastile, and a prisoner there.—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country.—Modern patriotism questionable, and why.—The perishable nature of the best human institutions.—Spiritual liberty not perishable.—The slavish state of man by nature.—Deliver him, Deist, if you can.—Grace must do it.—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated.—Their different treatment.—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free.—His relish of the works of God.—Address to the Creator.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK V.

## THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

'Tis morning; and the ſun, with ruddy orb
Aſcending, fires th' horizon; while the clouds,
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the diſk emerges more,
Reſemble moſt ſome city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafleſs wood. His ſlanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the ſnowy vale,
And, tinging all with his own roſy hue,
From ev'ry herb and ev'ry ſpiry blade
Stretches a length of ſhadow o'er the field.
Mine, ſpindling into longitude immenſe,
In ſpite of gravity, and ſage remark
That I myſelf am but a fleeting ſhade,

Provokes me to a ſmile. With eye aſkance
I view the muſcular proportion'd limb
Transform'd to a lean ſhank. The ſhapeleſs pair,
As they deſign'd to mock me, at my ſide
Take ſtep for ſtep; and, as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaſter'd wall,
Prepoſt'rous ſight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents,
And coarſer graſs, upſpearing o'er the reſt,
Of late unſightly and unſeen, now ſhine
Conſpicuous, and, in bright apparel clad
And fledg'd with icy feathers, nod ſuperb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and ſeem half petrified to ſleep
In unrecumbent ſadneſs. There they wait
Their wonted fodder; not like hung'ring man,
Fretful if unſupplied; but ſilent, meek,
And patient of the ſlow-pac'd ſwain's delay.
He from the ſtack carves out th' accuſtom'd load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the ſolid maſs:
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant ſtands,
With ſuch undeviating and even force

He ſevers it away: no needleſs care,
Left ſtorms ſhould overſet the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man; to wield the axe
And drive the wedge, in yonder foreſt drear,
From morn to eve his ſolitary taſk.
Shaggy, and lean, and ſhrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd ſhort, half lurcher and half cur—
His dog attends him. Cloſe behind his heel
Now creeps he ſlow; and now, with many a friſk
Wide-ſcamp'ring, ſnatches up the drifted ſnow
With iv'ry teeth, or ploughs it with his ſnout;
Then ſhakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedleſs of all his pranks, the ſturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor ſtops for aught,
But now and then with preſſure of his thumb
T' adjuſt the fragrant charge of a ſhort tube
That fumes beneath his noſe: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, ſcenting all the air.
Now from the rooſt, or from the neighb'ring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the firſt faint gleam
Of ſmiling day, they goſſip'd ſide by ſide,
Come trooping at the houſewife's well-known call

The feather'd tribes domeſtic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they bruſh the fleecy flood,
Conſcious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The ſparrows peep, and quit the ſhelt'ring eaves
To ſeize the fair occaſion. Well they eye
The ſcatter'd grain; and, thieviſhly reſolv'd
T' eſcape th' impending famine, often ſcar'd,
As oft return—a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each—the ſearch of ſunny nook,
Or ſhed impervious to the blaſt. Reſign'd
To ſad neceſſity, the cock foregoes
His wonted ſtrut; and, wading at their head
With well-conſider'd ſteps, ſeems to reſent
His alter'd gait and ſtatelineſs retrench'd.
How find the myriads, that in ſummer cheer
The hills and vallies with their ceaſeleſs ſongs,
Due ſuſtenance, or where ſubſiſt they now?
Earth yields them nought: th' impriſon'd worm is ſafe
Beneath the frozen clod; all ſeeds of herbs
Lie cover'd cloſe; and berry-bearing thorns,
That feed the thruſh, (whatever ſome ſuppoſe)
Afford the ſmaller minſtrels no ſupply.

The long protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their num'rous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thouſand ſeek an unmoleſted end,
As inſtinct prompts; ſelf-buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forſake the fields,
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now
Repays their labour more; and, perch'd aloft
By the way-ſide, or ſtalking in the path,
Lean penſioners upon the trav'ler's track,
Pick up their nauſeous dole, though ſweet to them,
Of voided pulſe or half-digeſted grain.
The ſtreams are loſt amid the ſplendid blank,
O'erwhelming all diſtinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fixt, the ſnowy weight
Lies undiſſolv'd; while ſilently beneath,
And unperceiv'd, the current ſteals away.
Not ſo where, ſcornful of a check, it leaps
The mill-dam, daſhes on the reſtleſs wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulph below:
No froſt can bind it there; its utmoſt force
Can but arreſt the light and ſmoky miſt
That in its fall the liquid ſheet throws wide,
And ſee where it has hung th' embroider'd banks
With forms ſo various, that no pow'rs of art,

The pencil or the pen, may trace the ſcene!
Here glitt'ring turrets riſe, upbearing high
(Fantaſtic miſarrangement!) on the roof
Large growth of what may ſeem the ſparkling trees
And ſhrubs of fairy land. The cryſtal drops
That trickle down the branches, faſt congeal'd,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.
Here grotto within grotto ſafe defies
The ſun-beam; there, emboſs'd and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thouſand ſhapes
Capricious, in which fancy ſeeks in vain
The likeneſs of ſome object ſeen before.
Thus nature works as if to mock at art,
And in defiance of her rival pow'rs;
By theſe fortuitous and random ſtrokes
Performing ſuch inimitable feats
As ſhe with all her rules can never reach.
Leſs worthy of applauſe, though more admir'd,
Becauſe a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial miſtreſs of the fur-clad Ruſs!
Thy moſt magnificent and mighty freak
The wonder of the North. No foreſt fell
When thou wouldſt build; no quarry ſent its ſtores

T' enrich thy walls: but thou didſt hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glaſſy wave.
In ſuch a palace Ariſtæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his loſt bees to her maternal ear:
In ſuch a palace poetry might place
The armory of winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy ſleet,
Skin piercing volley, bloſſom-bruiſing hail,
And ſnow that often blinds the trav'ler's courſe,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric roſe;—
No ſound of hammer or of ſaw was there:
Ice upon ice, the well-adjuſted parts
Were ſoon conjoin'd; nor other cement aſk'd
Than water interfus'd to make them one.
Lamps gracefully diſpos'd, and of all hues,
Illumin'd ev'ry ſide: a wat'ry light
Gleam'd through the clear tranſparency, that ſeem'd
Another moon new riſen, or meteor fall'n
From heav'n to earth, of lambent flame ſerene.
So ſtood the brittle prodigy; though ſmooth
And ſlipp'ry the materials, yet froſt-bound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,

That royal reſidence might well befit,
For grandeur or for uſe. Long wavy wreaths
Of flow'rs, that fear'd no enemy but warmth,
Bluſh'd on the pannels. Mirror needed none
Where all was vitreous; but in order due
Convivial table and commodious ſeat
(What ſeem'd at leaſt commodious ſeat) were there;
Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne auguſt.
The ſame lubricity was found in all,
And all was moiſt to the warm touch; a ſcene
Of evaneſcent glory, once a ſtream,
And ſoon to ſlide into a ſtream again.
Alas! 'twas but a mortifying ſtroke
Of undeſign'd ſeverity, that glane'd
(Made by a monarch) on her own eſtate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas tranſient in its nature, as in ſhow
'Twas durable; as worthleſs, as it ſeem'd
Intrinſically precious; to the foot
Treach'rous and falſe; it ſmil'd, and it was cold.

Great princes have great playthings. Some have play'd
At hewing mountains into men, and ſome

At building human wonders mountain-high.
Some have amus'd the dull, ſad years of life
(Life ſpent in indolence, and therefore ſad)
With ſchemes of monumental fame; and ſought
By pyramids and mauſolean pomp,
Short-liv'd themſelves, t' immortalize their bones.
Some ſeek diverſion in the tented field,
And make the ſorrows of mankind their ſport.
But war's a game, which, were their ſubjects wiſe,
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well
T' extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whoſe infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with miſchief; and who ſpoil,
Becauſe men ſuffer it, their toy the world.

When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confed'racy of projectors wild and vain
Was ſplit into diverſity of tongues,
Then, as a ſhepherd ſeparates his flock,
Theſe to the upland, to the valley thoſe,
God drave aſunder, and aſſign'd their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its diſtribution fair
And equal; and he bade them dwell in peace.

Peace was awhile their care: they plough'd, and
ſow'd,
And reap'd their plenty, without grudge or ſtrife.
But violence can never longer ſleep
Than human paſſions pleaſe. In ev'ry heart
Are ſown the ſparks that kindle fi'ry war;
Occaſion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already ſhed a brother's blood:
The deluge waſh'd it out; but left unquench'd
The ſeeds of murder in the breaſt of man.
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his deſcending progeny was found
The firſt artificer of death; the ſhrewd
Contriver who firſt ſweated at the forge,
And forc'd the blunt and yet unbloodied ſteel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal nam'd, the Vulcan of old times,
The ſword and faulchion their inventor claim;
And the firſt ſmith was the firſt murd'rer's ſon.
His art ſurviv'd the waters; and ere long,
When man was multiplied and ſpread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
Theſe meadows and that range of hills his own,
The taſted ſweets of property begat

Deſire of more; and induſtry in ſome,
T' improve and cultivate their juſt demeſne,
Made others covet what they ſaw ſo fair.
Thus war began on earth: theſe fought for ſpoil,
And thoſe in ſelf-defence. Savage at firſt,
The onſet, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the reſt, for ſtrength,
For ſtratagem, or courage, or for all,
Was choſen leader: him they ſerv'd in war,
And him in peace, for ſake of warlike deeds
Rev'renc'd no leſs. Who could with him compare?
Or who ſo worthy to control themſelves
As he whoſe proweſs had ſubdu'd their foes?
Thus war, affording field for the diſplay
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For ſkill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modeſty and meekneſs; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who ſet it on,
Was ſure t' intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of moſt,
That, being parcel of the common maſs,
And deſtitute of means to raiſe themſelves,

They ſink, and ſettle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehenſive faculty, that graſps
Great purpoſes with eaſe, that turns and wields,
Almoſt without an effort, plans too vaſt
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conſcious of impotence, they ſoon grow drunk
With gazing, when they ſee an able man
Step forth to notice; and, beſotted thus,
Build him a pedeſtal, and ſay, "Stand there,
"And be our admiration and our praiſe."
They roll themſelves before him in the duſt,
Then moſt deſerving in their own account
When moſt extravagant in his applauſe,
As if exalting him they rais'd themſelves.
Thus by degrees, ſelf-cheated of their ſound
And ſober judgment, that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him ſo,
That in due ſeaſon he forgets it too.
Inflated and aſtrut with ſelf-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet; and ere long,
Adopting their miſtake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges, born

To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,
And ſweating in his ſervice, his caprice
Becomes the ſoul that animates them all.
He deems a thouſand, or ten thouſand lives,
Spent in the purchaſe of renown for him,
An eaſy reck'ning; and they think the ſame.
Thus kings were firſt invented, and thus kings
Were burniſh'd into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous ſwamp;
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.
Strange, that ſuch folly as lifts bloated man
To eminence, fit only for a god,
Should ever drivel out of human lips,
Ev'n in the cradled weakneſs of the world!
Still ſtranger much, that, when at length mankind
Had reach'd the ſinewy firmneſs of their youth,
And could diſcriminate and argue well
On ſubjects more myſterious, they were yet
Babes in the cauſe of freedom, and ſhould fear
And quake before the gods themſelves had made!
But above meaſure ſtrange, that neither proof
Of ſad experience, nor examples ſet
By ſome whoſe patriot virtue has prevail'd,
Can even now, when they are grown mature

In wiſdom, and with philoſophic deeps
Familiar, ſerve t' emancipate the reſt!
Such dupes are men to cuſtom, and ſo prone
To rev'rence what is ancient, and can plead
A courſe of long obſervance for its uſe,
That even ſervitude, the worſt of ills,
Becauſe deliver'd down from ſire to ſon,
Is kept and guarded as a ſacred thing!
But is it fit, or can it bear the ſhock
Of rational diſcuſſion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom luſt
And folly in as ample meaſure meet
As in the boſoms of the ſlaves he rules,
Should be a deſpot abſolute, and boaſt
Himſelf the only freeman of his land?
Should, when he pleaſes, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation giv'n, or wrong ſuſtain'd,
And force the beggarly laſt doit, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thouſands, weary of penurious life,
A ſplendid opportunity to die?

Say ye, who (with leſs prudence than of old
Jotham aſcrib'd to his aſſembled trees
In politic convention) put your truſt
I' th' ſhadow of a bramble, and, reclin'd
In fancied peace beneath his dang'rous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his ſway,
Where find ye paſſive fortitude? Whence ſprings
Your ſelf-denying zeal, that holds it good
To ſtroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with ſtreamers of continual praiſe?
We, too, are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, reſpects his bounds,
And reigns content within them: him we ſerve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:
But, recollecting ſtill that he is man,
We truſt him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious ſtill;
May exerciſe amiſs his proper pow'rs,
Or covet more than freemen chooſe to grant:
Beyond that mark is treaſon. He is our's
T' adminiſter, to guard, t' adorn, the ſtate,
But not to warp or change it. We are his
To ſerve him nobly in the common cauſe,

True to the death, but not to be his ſlaves.
Mark now the diff'rence, ye that boaſt your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and our's.
We love the man; the paltry pageant you.
We the chief patron of the commonwealth;
You the regardleſs author of its woes.
We, for the ſake of liberty, a king;
You chains and bondage, for a tyrant's ſake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reaſon, is judicious, manly, free;
Your's, a blind inſtinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the duſt.
Were kingſhip as true treaſure as it ſeems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wiſe man's wiſh,
I would not be a king to be belov'd
Cauſeleſs, and daub'd with undiſcerning praiſe,
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whoſe freedom is by ſuff'rance, and at will
Of a ſuperior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Expos'd to manacles, deſerves them well.
The ſtate that ſtrives for liberty, though foil'd,

And forc'd t' abandon what ſhe bravely ſought,
Deſerves at leaſt applauſe for her attempt,
And pity for her loſs. But that's a cauſe
Not often unſucceſsful: pow'r uſurp'd
Is weakneſs when oppos'd; conſcious of wrong,
'Tis puſillanimous and prone to flight.
But ſlaves, that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itſelf poſſeſs
All that the conteſt calls for; ſpirit, ſtrength,
The ſcorn of danger, and united hearts;
The ſureſt preſage of the good they ſeek *.

Then ſhame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her loſſes and defeats,
Old or of later date, by ſea or land,
Her houſe of bondage, worſe than that of old
Which God aveng'd on Pharaoh—the Baſtille!
Ye horrid tow'rs, th' abode of broken hearts;
Ye dungeons and ye cages of deſpair,

* The author hopes that he ſhall not be cenſured for unneceſſary warmth upon ſo intereſting a ſubject. He is aware that it is become almoſt faſhionable to ſtigmatize ſuch ſentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill ſymptom, and peculiar to modern times.

That monarchs have ſupplied from age to age
With muſic ſuch as ſuits their ſov'reign ears—
The ſighs and groans of miſerable men!
There's not an Engliſh heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fall'n at laſt; to know
That ev'n our enemies, ſo oft employ'd
In forging chains for us, themſelves were free.
For he who values liberty confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cauſe engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cauſe of man.
There dwell the moſt forlorn of human kind;
Immur'd though unaccus'd, condemn'd untried,
Cruelly ſpar'd, and hopeleſs of eſcape!
There, like the viſionary emblem ſeen
By him of Babylon, life ſtands a ſtump,
And, filletted about with hoops of braſs,
Still lives, though all its pleaſant boughs are gone.
To count the hour-bell and expect no change;
And ever, as the ſullen ſound is heard,
Still to reflect, that, though a joyleſs note
To him whoſe moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thouſand rovers in the world at large
Account it muſic; that it ſummons ſome

To theatre, or jocund feaſt or ball:
The wearied hireling finds it a releaſe
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels ev'ry welcome ſtroke
Upon his heart-ſtrings, trembling with delight—
To fly for refuge from diſtracting thought
To ſuch amuſements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard-ſhifting, and without her tools—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In ſtagg'ring types, his predeceſſor's tale,
A ſad memorial, and ſubjoin his own—
To turn purveyor to an overgorg'd
And bloated ſpider, till the pamper'd peſt
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and ſerves him for a friend—
To wear out time in numb'ring to and fro
The ſtuds that thick emboſs his iron door;
Then downward and then upward, then aſlant
And then alternate; with a fickly hope
By dint of change to give his taſteleſs taſk
Some reliſh; till the ſum, exactly found
In all directions, he begins again—
Oh comfortleſs exiſtence! hemm'd around
With woes, which who that ſuffers would not kneel

And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man ſhould thus encroach on fellow man,
Abridge him of his juſt and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon th' endearments of domeſtic life
And ſocial, nip his fruitfulneſs and uſe,
And doom him for perhaps an heedleſs word
To barrenneſs, and ſolitude, and tears,
Moves indignation; makes the name of king
(Of king whom ſuch prerogative can pleaſe)
As dreadful as the Manichean god,
Ador'd through fear, ſtrong only to deſtroy.

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flow'r
Of fleeting life its luſtre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it. All conſtraint,
Except what wiſdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progreſs in the road of ſcience; blinds
The eyeſight of diſcov'ry; and begets,
In thoſe that ſuffer it, a ſordid mind
Beſtial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore ſtill, blame-worthy as thou art,

With all thy loſs of empire, and though ſqueez'd
By public exigence till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the ſtate,
Thee I account ſtill happy, and the chief
Among the nations, ſeeing thou art free:
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and diſpoſes much
All hearts to ſadneſs, and none more than mine:
Thine unadult'rate manners are leſs ſoft
And plauſible than ſocial life requires,
And thou haſt need of diſcipline and art
To give thee what politer France receives
From Nature's bounty—that humane addreſs
And ſweetneſs, without which no pleaſure is
In converſe, either ſtarv'd by cold reſerve,
Or ſluſh'd with fierce diſpute, a ſenſeleſs brawl:
Yet, being free, I love thee: for the ſake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Diſgrac'd as thou haſt been, poor as thou art,
To ſeek no ſublunary reſt beſide.
But, once enſlav'd, farewell! I could endure
Chains no where patiently; and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughneſs in the grain

Of British natures, wanting its excuſe
That it belongs to freemen, would diſguſt
And ſhock me. I ſhould then, with double pain,
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And, if I muſt bewail the bleſſing loſt,
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at leaſt bewail it under ſkies
Milder, among a people leſs auſtere;
In ſcenes which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loſs I felt.
Do I forebode impoſſible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heav'n grant I may!
But th' age of virtuous politics is paſt,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too ſhrewd to be ſincere,
And we too wiſe to truſt them. He that takes
Deep in his ſoft credulity the ſtamp
Deſign'd by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themſelves the ſlaves of luſt,
Incurs deriſion for his eaſy faith
And lack of knowledge, and with cauſe enough:
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole
Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend

Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?
Can he be ſtrenuous in his country's cauſe
Who ſlights the charities, for whoſe dear ſake
That country, if at all, muſt be belov'd?

'Tis therefore ſober and good men are ſad
For England's glory, ſeeing it wax pale
And ſickly, while her champions wear their hearts
So looſe to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undiſturb'd by factious fumes,
Can deem them truſty to the gen'ral weal.
Such were they not of old, whoſe temper'd blades
Diſpers'd the ſhackles of uſurp'd control,
And hew'd them link from link: then Albion's ſons
Were ſons indeed; they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs;
And, ſhining each in his domeſtic ſphere,
Shone brighter ſtill, once call'd to public view.
'Tis therefore many, whoſe ſequeſter'd lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate per force ſome dire event;
And, ſeeing the old caſtle of the ſtate,
That promis'd once more firmneſs, ſo aſſail'd
That all its tempeſt-beaten turrets ſhake,

Stand motionleſs expectants of its fall.
All has its date below; the fatal hour
Was regiſter'd in heav'n ere time began.
We turn to duſt, and all our mightieſt works
Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock:
A diſtant age aſks where the fabric ſtood;
And in the duſt, ſifted and ſearch'd in vain,
The undiſcoverable ſecret ſleeps.

But there is yet a liberty, unſung
By poets, and by ſenators unprais'd,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow'rs
Of earth and hell confed'rate take away:
A liberty, which perſecution, fraud,
Oppreſſion, priſons, have no pow'r to bind;
Which whoſo taſtes can be enſlav'd no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, deriv'd from heav'n;
Bought with HIS blood who gave it to mankind,
And ſeal'd with the ſame token! It is held
By charter, and that charter ſanction'd ſure
By th' unimpeachable and awful oath
And promiſe of a God! His other gifts

All bear the royal ſtamp that ſpeaks them his,
And are auguſt; but this tranſcends them all.
His other works, the viſible diſplay
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word
That, finding an interminable ſpace
Unoccupied, has fill'd the void ſo well,
And made ſo ſparkling what was dark before.
But theſe are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of ſo fair a ſcene,
Might well ſuppoſe th' artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had he not himſelf
Pronounc'd it tranſient, glorious as it is,
And, ſtill deſigning a more glorious far,
Doom'd it as inſufficient for his praiſe.
Theſe, therefore, are occaſional, and paſs;
Form'd for the confutation of the fool,
Whoſe lyeing heart diſputes againſt a God;
That office ſerv'd, they muſt be ſwept away.
Not ſo the labours of his love: they ſhine
In other heav'ns than theſe that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradiſe that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he ſends
Large prelibation oft to ſaints below.

Of theſe the firſt in order, and the pledge
And confident aſſurance of the reſt,
Is liberty:—a flight into his arms
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
A clear eſcape from tyrannizing luſt,
And full immunity from penal woe.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes and a dungeon; and his body ſerves
The triple purpoſe. In that ſickly, foul,
Opprobrious reſidence, he finds them all.
Propenſe his heart to idols, he is held
In ſilly dotage on created things,
Careleſs of their Creator. And that low
And ſordid gravitation of his pow'rs
To a vile clod ſo draws him, with ſuch force
Reſiſtleſs from the centre he ſhould ſeek,
That he at laſt forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward; his ambition is to ſink,
To reach a depth profounder ſtill, and ſtill
Profounder, in the fathomleſs abyſs
Of folly, plunging in purſuit of death.
But, ere he gain the comfortleſs repoſe
He ſeeks, and acquieſcence of his ſoul,

In heav'n-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not? from luſts oppos'd in vain,
And ſelf-reproaching conſcience. He foreſees
The fatal iſſue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune, and dignity; the loſs of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, ſupportable. Still worſe,
Far worſe than all the plagues with which his ſins
Infect his happieſt moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeleſs mis'ry. Future death,
And death ſtill future. Not an haſty ſtroke,
Like that which ſends him to the duſty grave;
But unrepealable enduring death!
Scripture is ſtill a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forg'ry, may be true;
What none but bad men wiſh exploded, muſt.
That ſcruple checks him. Riot is not loud,
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midſt
Of laughter his compunctions are ſincere;
And he abhors the jeſt by which he ſhines.
Remorſe begets reform. His maſter-luſt
Falls firſt before his reſolute rebuke,
And ſeems dethron'd and vanquiſh'd. Peace enſues,
But ſpurious and ſhort-liv'd; the puny child

Of ſelf-congratulating pride, begot
On fancied innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his beſt eſſay
A preſage ominous, portending ſtill
Its own diſhonour by a worſe relapſe.
Till Nature, unavailing nature, foil'd
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reaſon now
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cauſe,
Perverſely, which of late ſhe ſo condemn'd;
With ſhallow ſhifts and old devices, worn
And tatter'd in the ſervice of debauch,
Cov'ring his ſhame from his offended ſight.

"Hath God indeed giv'n appetites to man,
"And ſtor'd the earth ſo plenteouſly with means
"To gratify the hunger of his wiſh;
"And doth he reprobate, and will he damn,
"The uſe of his own bounty? making firſt
"So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
"So ſtrict, that leſs than perfect muſt deſpair?
"Falſehood! which whoſo but ſuſpects of truth
"Diſhonours God, and makes a ſlave of man.
"Do they themſelves, who undertake for hire

" The teacher's office, and diſpenſe at large
" Their weekly dole of edifying ſtrains,
" Attend to their own muſic? have they faith
" In what with ſuch ſolemnity of tone
" And geſture they propound to our belief?
" Nay—conduct hath the loudeſt tongue. The voice
" Is but an inſtrument, on which the prieſt
" May play what tune he pleaſes. In the deed,
" The unequivocal authentic deed,
" We find ſound argument, we read the heart."

Such reas'nings (if that name muſt need belong
T' excuſes in which reaſon has no part)
Serve to compoſe a ſpirit well inclin'd
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And ſin without diſturbance. Often urg'd,
(As often as libidinous diſcourſe
Exhauſted, he reſorts to ſolemn themes
Of theological and grave import)
They gain at laſt his unreſerv'd aſſent;
Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
Of luſt, and on the anvil of deſpair,
He ſlights the ſtrokes of conſcience. Nothing moves,
Or nothing much, his conſtancy in ill;

Vain tamp'ring has but foſter'd his diſeaſe;
'Tis deſp'rate, and he ſleeps the ſleep of death!
Haſte now, philoſopher, and ſet him free.
Charm the deaf ſerpent wiſely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitneſs, moral truth
How lovely, and the moral ſenſe how ſure,
Conſulted and obey'd, to guide his ſteps
Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in ſuch a cauſe. Spend all the pow'rs
Of rant and rhapſody in virtue's praiſe:
Be moſt ſublimely good, verboſely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy proſe,
Till it out-mantle all the pride of verſe.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high ſounding braſs,
Smitten in vain! ſuch muſic cannot charm
Th' eclipſe that intercepts truth's heav'nly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide-wand'ring ſoul.
The STILL SMALL VOICE is wanted. He muſt ſpeak,
Whoſe word leaps forth at once to its effect;
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the ſlave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid ſpeech
And ſtately tone of moraliſts, who boaſt

As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to ſmooth
The ſhag of ſavage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in ſong:
But transformation of apoſtate man
From fool to wiſe, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And he by means in philoſophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of diſdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the loſt kind, extracting from the lips
Of aſps their venom, overpow'ring ſtrength
By weakneſs, and hoſtility by love.

Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cauſe
Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deſerve,
Receive proud recompenſe. We give in charge
Their names to the ſweet lyre. Th' hiſtoric muſe,
Proud of the treaſure, marches with it down
To lateſt times; and ſculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in ſtone and ever-during braſs
To guard them, and t' immortalize her truſt:
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To thoſe who, poſted at the ſhrine of truth,

Have fall'n in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well ſpent in ſuch a ſtrife, may earn indeed,
And for a time enſure, to his lov'd land
The ſweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs ſtruggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is ſhed
In confirmation of the nobleſt claim—
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To ſoar, and to anticipate the ſkies!
Yet few remember them. They liv'd unknown
Till perſecution dragg'd them into fame,
And chas'd them up to heav'n. Their aſhes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and ſanctifies his ſong:
And hiſtory, ſo warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious ſuff'rers little praiſe *.

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are ſlaves beſide. There's not a chain

* See Hume.

That helliſh foes, confed'rate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he caſts it off
With as much eaſe as Samſon his green wyths.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and, though poor perhaps compar'd
With thoſe whoſe manſions glitter in his ſight,
Calls the delightful ſcen'ry all his own.
His are the mountains, and the vallies his,
And the reſplendent rivers. His t' enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inſpir'd,
Can lift to heaven an unpreſumptuous eye,
And ſmiling ſay—" My Father made them all!"
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphaſis of int'reſt his,
Whoſe eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whoſe heart with praiſe, and whoſe exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and ſtill upholds, a world
So cloth'd with beauty for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded ſoil, and ye may waſte much good
In ſenſeleſs riot; but ye will not find,
In feaſt or in the chaſe, in ſong or dance,

A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd
Of uſurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his father's work,
And has a richer uſe of your's than you.
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
Of no mean city; plann'd or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the ſea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the ſame in ev'ry ſtate;
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whoſe ev'ry day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it leſs:
For he has wings that neither ſickneſs, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook ſo narrow but he ſpreads them there
With eaſe, and is at large. Th' oppreſſor holds
His body bound; but knows not what a range
His ſpirit takes, unconſcious of a chain;
And that to bind him is a vain attempt
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint thyſelf with God, if thou would'ſt taſte
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
Thou ſhalt perceive that thou waſt blind before:

——— *The Oppreſsor holds*
*The Body bound, but knows not what a range*
*The Spirit takes.*

Thine eye ſhall be inſtructed; and thine heart,
Made pure, ſhall reliſh, with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone
And eyes intent upon the ſcanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedleſs of the ſcene outſpread
Beneath, beyond, and ſtretching far away
From inland regions to the diſtant main.
Man views it, and admires; but reſts content
With what he views. The landſcape has his praiſe,
But not its author. Unconcern'd who form'd
The paradiſe he ſees, he finds it ſuch,
And ſuch well-pleas'd to find it, aſks no more.
Not ſo the mind that has been touch'd from heav'n,
And in the ſchool of ſacred wiſdom taught
To read his wonders, in whoſe thought the world,
Fair as it is, exiſted ere it was.
Not for its own ſake merely, but for his
Much more who faſhion'd it, he gives it praiſe;
Praiſe that, from earth reſulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowledg'd ſov'reign, finds at once
Its only juſt proprietor in Him.
The ſoul that ſees him, or receives ſublim'd

New faculties, or learns at leaſt t' employ
More worthily the pow'rs ſhe own'd before,
Diſcerns in all things, what with ſtupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then ſhe overlook'd—
A ray of heav'nly light, gilding all forms
Terreſtrial in the vaſt and the minute;
The unambiguous footſteps of the God
Who gives its luſtre to an inſect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much converſant with heav'n, ſhe often holds
With thoſe fair miniſters of light to man,
That fill the ſkies nightly with ſilent pomp,
Sweet conference. Inquires what ſtrains were they
With which heav'n rang, when ev'ry ſtar, in haſte
To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the ſons of God
Shouted for joy.—" Tell me, ye ſhining hoſts,
" That navigate a ſea that knows no ſtorms,
" Beneath a vault unſullied with a cloud,
" If from your elevation, whence ye view
" Diſtinctly ſcenes inviſible to man,
" And ſyſtems of whoſe birth no tidings yet
" Have reach'd this nether world, ye ſpy a race
" Favour'd as our's; tranſgreſſors from the womb,

" And hafting to a grave, yet doom'd to riſe,
" And to poſſeſs a brighter heav'n than your's?
" As one who long detain'd on foreign ſhores
" Pants to return, and when he ſees afar
" His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks,
" From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
" Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
" So I with animated hopes behold,
" And many an aching wiſh, your beamy fires,
" That ſhow like beacons in the blue abyſs,
" Ordain'd to guide th' embodied ſpirit home
" From toilſome life to never-ending reſt.
" Love kindles as I gaze. I feel deſires
" That give aſſurance of their own ſucceſs,
" And that, infus'd from heav'n, muſt thither tend."

So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, myſterious word!
Which whoſo ſees no longer wanders loſt,
With intellects bemaz'd in endleſs doubt,
But runs the road of wiſdom. Thou haſt built,
With means that were not till by thee employ'd,
Worlds that had never been hadſt thou in ſtrength
Been leſs, or leſs benevolent than ſtrong.

They are thy witneſſes, who ſpeak thy pow'r
And goodneſs infinite, but ſpeak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures teſtify of thee
Till thou proclaim thyſelf. Their's is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praiſe of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its uſe.
Till thou art heard, imaginations vain
Poſſeſs the heart, and fables falſe as hell;
Yet, deem'd oracular, lure down to death
The uninform'd and heedleſs ſouls of men.
We give to chance, blind chance, ourſelves as blind,
The glory of thy work; which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human ſcrutiny, and prov'd
Then ſkilful moſt when moſt ſeverely judg'd.
But chance is not; or is not where thou reign'ſt:
Thy providence forbids that fickle pow'r
(If pow'r ſhe be that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refuſing while we can
Inſtruction, and inventing to ourſelves
Gods ſuch as guilt makes welcome; gods that ſleep,

Or diſregard our follies, or that ſit
Amus'd ſpectators of this buſtling ſtage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure;
Made ſuch by thee, we love thee for that cauſe
For which we ſhunn'd and hated thee before.
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,
Breaks on the ſoul, and by a flaſh from heav'n
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till thou haſt touch'd them; 'tis the voice of ſong—
A loud hoſanna ſent from all thy works;
Which he that hears it with a ſhout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the gen'ral praiſe.
In that bleſt moment Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, diſcloſes with a ſmile
The author of her beauties, who, retir'd
Behind his own creation, works unſeen
By the impure, and hears his pow'r denied.
Thou art the ſource and centre of all minds,
Their only point of reſt, eternal Word!
From thee departing, they are loſt, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
From thee is all that ſooths the life of man,

His high endeavour, and his glad ſucceſs,
His ſtrength to ſuffer, and his will to ſerve.
But oh thou bounteous giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyſelf the crown!
Give what thou canſt, without thee we are poor;
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK VI.

## ARGUMENT OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

*Bells at a diſtance.—Their effect.—A fine noon in winter.—A ſheltered walk.—Meditation better than books.—Our familiarity with the courſe of nature makes it appear leſs wonderful than it is.—The transformation that ſpring effects in a ſhrubbery deſcribed.—A miſtake concerning the courſe of nature corrected.—God maintains it by an unremitted act.—The amuſements faſhionable at this hour of the day reproved.—Animals happy, a delightful ſight.—Origin of cruelty to animals.—That it is a great crime proved from ſcripture.—That proof illuſtrated by a tale.—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful deſtruction of them.—Their good and uſeful properties inſiſted on.—Apology for the encomiums beſtowed by the author on animals.—Inſtances of man's extravagant praiſe of man.—The groans of the creation ſhall have an end.—A view taken of the reſtoration of all things.—An invocation and an invitation of him who ſhall bring it to paſs.—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uſeleſſneſs.—Concluſion.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK VI.

## THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

There is in ſouls a ſympathy with ſounds;
And, as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd
With melting airs, or martial, briſk, or grave:
Some chord in uniſon with what we hear
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.
How ſoft the muſic of thoſe village bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence ſweet, now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder ſtill,
Clear and ſonorous, as the gale comes on!
With eaſy force it opens all the cells
Where mem'ry ſlept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the ſcene recurs,

And with it all its pleaſures and its pains.
Such comprehenſive views the ſpirit takes,
That in a few ſhort moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his courſe)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retroſpect the journey ſeems,
It ſeem'd not always ſhort; the rugged path,
And proſpect oft ſo dreary and forlorn,
Mov'd many a ſigh at its diſheart'ning length.
Yet, feeling preſent evils, while the paſt
Faintly impreſs the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wiſh time ſpent revok'd,
That we might try the ground again, where once
(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)
We miſs'd that happineſs we might have found!
Some friend is gone, perhaps his ſon's beſt friend!
A father, whoſe authority, in ſhow
When moſt ſevere, and muſt'ring all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whoſe favour, like the clouds of ſpring, might low'r,
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a bleſſing in its darkeſt frown,
Threat'ning at once and nouriſhing the plant.
We lov'd, but not enough, the gentle hand

That rear'd us. At a thoughtleſs age, allur'd
By ev'ry gilded folly, we renounc'd
His ſhelt'ring ſide, and wilfully forewent
That converſe which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected fire! a mother too,
That ſofter friend, perhaps more gladly ſtill,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.
Sorrow has, ſince they went, ſubdu'd and tam'd
The playful humour; he could now endure,
(Himſelf grown ſober in the vale of tears)
And feel a parent's preſence no reſtraint.
But not to underſtand a treaſure's worth
Till time has ſtol'n away the ſlighted good,
Is cauſe of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderneſs it is.
The few that pray at all pray oft amiſs,
And, ſeeking grace t' improve the prize they hold,
Would urge a wiſer ſuit than aſking more.

The night was winter in his roughest mood;
The morning ſharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the ſouthern ſide of the ſlant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blaſt,

The ſeaſon ſmiles, reſigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a ſpeck
The dazzling ſplendour of the ſcene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;
And through the trees I view th' embattled tow'r
Whence all the muſic. I again perceive
The ſoothing influence of the wafted ſtrains,
And ſettle in ſoft muſings as I tread
The walk, ſtill verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whoſe outſpread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind ſways it, has yet well ſuffic'd,
And, intercepting in their ſilent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noiſe is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreaſt warbles ſtill, but is content
With ſlender notes, and more than half ſuppreſs'd:
Pleas'd with his ſolitude, and flitting light
From ſpray to ſpray, where'er he reſts he ſhakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillneſs, accompanied with ſounds ſo ſoft,
Charms more than ſilence. Meditation here

May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give an useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smooth'd and squar'd and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment, hood-wink'd. Some the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them by a tune entranc'd.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing, therefore, without pause or choice,
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.

But trees, and rivulets whoſe rapid courſe
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And ſheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primroſe ere her time
Peeps through the moſs that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no ſtudent. Wiſdom there, and truth,
Not ſhy, as in the world, and to be won
By ſlow ſolicitation, ſeize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themſelves.

What prodigies can pow'r divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,
And all in ſight of inattentive man?
Familiar with th' effect we ſlight the cauſe,
And, in the conſtancy of nature's courſe,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See nought to wonder at. Should God again,
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual ſun,
How would the world admire! but ſpeaks it leſs
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to ſink and when to riſe,

Age after age, than to arreſt his courſe?
All we behold is miracle; but, ſeen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.
Where now the vital energy that mov'd,
While ſummer was, the pure and ſubtile lymph
Through th' imperceptible meand'ring veins
Of leaf and flow'r? It ſleeps; and th' icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impreſs'd
A cold ſtagnation on th' inteſtine tide.
But let the months go round, a few ſhort months,
And all ſhall be reſtor'd. Theſe naked ſhoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry muſic, ſighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And, more aſpiring, and with ampler ſpread,
Shall boaſt new charms, and more than they have loſt.
Then, each in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publiſh, even to the diſtant eye,
Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich
In ſtreaming gold; ſyringa, iv'ry pure;
The ſcentleſs and the ſcented roſe; this red
And of an humbler growth, the * other tall,

* The Guelder-roſe.

And throwing up into the darkeſt gloom
Of neighb'ring cypreſs, or more ſable yew,
Her ſilver globes, light as the foamy ſurf
That the wind ſevers from the broken wave;
The lilac, various in array, now white,
Now ſanguine, and her beauteous head now ſet
With purple ſpikes pyramidal, as if,
Studious of ornament, yet unreſolv'd
Which hue the moſt approv'd, ſhe choſe them all;
Copious of flow'rs the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compenſating her ſickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late;
Hypericum, all bloom, ſo thick a ſwarm
Of flow'rs, like flies clothing her ſlender rods,
That ſcarce a leaf appears; mezerion, too,
Though leafleſs, well attir'd, and thick beſet
With bluſhing wreaths, inveſting ev'ry ſpray;
Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
Her bloſſoms; and, luxuriant above all,
The jaſmine, throwing wide her elegant ſweets,
The deep dark green of whoſe unvarniſh'd leaf
Makes more conſpicuous, and illumines more
The bright profuſion of her ſcatter'd ſtars.—
Theſe have been, and theſe ſhall be in their day;

And all this uniform, uncolour'd ſcene,
Shall be diſmantled of its fleecy load,
And flufh into variety again.
From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
Is Nature's progreſs, when ſhe lectures man
In heav'nly truth; evincing, as ſhe makes
The grand tranſition, that there lives and works
A ſoul in all things, and that ſoul is God.
The beauties of the wilderneſs are his,
That make ſo gay the ſolitary place
Where no eye ſees them. And the fairer forms
That cultivation glories in, are his.
He ſets the bright proceſſion on its way,
And marſhals all the order of the year;
He marks the bounds which winter may not paſs,
And blunts his pointed fury; in its caſe,
Ruſſet and rude, folds up the tender germ,
Uninjur'd, with inimitable art;
And, ere one flow'ry ſeaſon fades and dies,
Deſigns the blooming wonders of the next.

Some ſay that, in the origin of things,
When all creation ſtarted into birth,
The infant elements receiv'd a law,

From which they ſwerve not ſince. That under force
Of that controuling ordinance they move,
And need not his immediate hand, who firſt
Preſcrib'd their courſe, to regulate it now.
Thus dream they, and contrive to ſave a God
Th' incumbrance of his own concerns, and ſpare
The great Artificer of all that moves
The ſtreſs of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitted vigilance and care,
As too laborious and ſevere a taſk.
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it ſeems,
To ſpan omnipotence, and meaſure might,
That knows no meaſure, by the ſcanty rule
And ſtandard of his own, that is to-day,
And is not ere to-morrow's ſun go down!
But how ſhould matter occupy a charge
Dull as it is, and ſatisfy a law
So vaſt in its demands, unleſs impell'd
To ceaſeleſs ſervice by a ceaſeleſs force,
And under preſſure of ſome conſcious cauſe?
The Lord of all, himſelf through all diffus'd,
Suſtains, and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whoſe cauſe is God. He feeds the ſecret fire

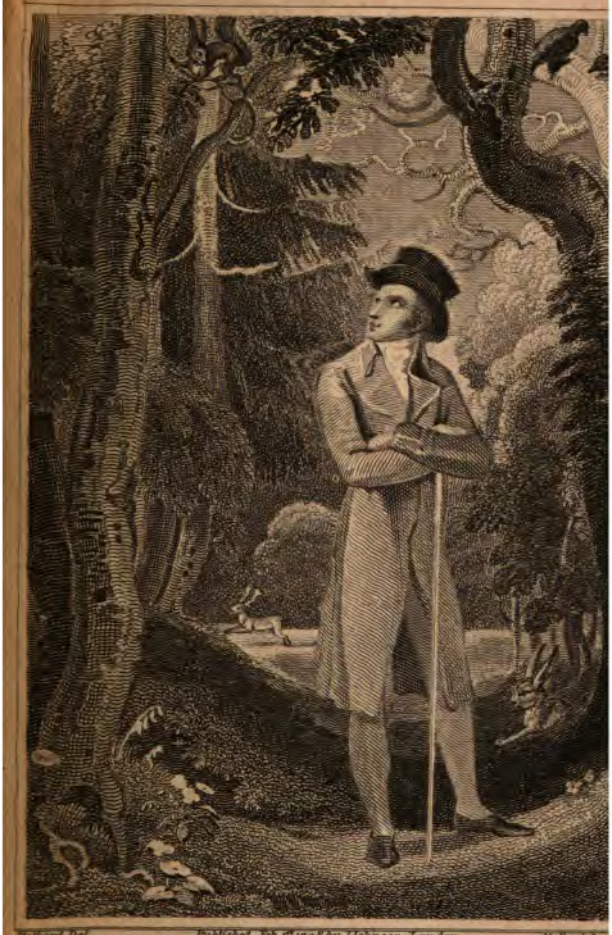
By which the mighty proceſs is maintain'd,
Who ſleeps not, is not weary; in whoſe ſight
Slow-circling ages are as tranſient days;
Whoſe work is without labour; whoſe deſigns
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
And whoſe beneficence no charge exhauſts.
Him blind antiquity profan'd, not ſerv'd,
With ſelf-taught rites, and under various names,
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddeſſes and gods
That were not; and commending, as they would,
To each ſome province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under one. One ſpirit—His
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
Rules univerſal nature. Not a flow'r
But ſhows ſome touch, in ſpeckle, ſtreak, or ſtain,
Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inſpires
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countleſs as the ſea-ſide ſands,
The forms with which he ſprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of ſcent in fruit or flow'r,

Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majeſtic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the ſun,
Prompts with remembrance of a preſent God!
His preſence, who made all ſo fair, perceiv'd,
Makes all ſtill fairer. As with him no ſcene
Is dreary, ſo with him all ſeaſons pleaſe.
Though winter had been none, had man been true,
And earth be puniſh'd for its tenant's ſake,
Yet not in vengeance; as this ſmiling ſky,
So ſoon ſucceeding ſuch an angry night,
And theſe diſſolving ſnows, and this clear ſtream
Recov'ring faſt its liquid muſic, prove.

Who then, that has a mind well ſtrung and tun'd
To contemplation, and within his reach
A ſcene ſo friendly to his fav'rite taſk,
Would waſte attention at the chequer'd board,
His hoſt of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and counter-marching, with an eye
As fixt as marble, with a forehead ridg'd
And furrow'd into ſtorms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?—

Nor envies he aught more their idle ſport,
Who pant with application miſapplied
To trivial toys, and, puſhing iv'ry balls
Acroſs a velvet level, feel a joy
Akin to rapture when the bawble finds
Its deſtin'd goal, of difficult acceſs.—
Nor deems he wiſer him, who gives his noon
To miſs, the mercer's plague, from ſhop to ſhop
Wand'ring, and litt'ring with unfolded ſilks
The poliſh'd counter, and approving none,
Or promiſing with ſmiles to call again.—
Nor him, who by his vanity ſeduc'd,
And ſooth'd into a dream that he diſcerns
The diff'rence of a Guido from a daub,
Frequents the crowded auction: ſtation'd there
As duly as the Langford of the ſhow,
With glaſs at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accompliſh'd in the fulſome cant
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with eaſe;
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
That he has let it paſs—but never bids!

Here, unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
Ev'n in the spring and play-time of the year,
That calls th' unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome sallad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The tim'rous hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stock dove, unalarm'd,
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play:
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighb'ring beach; there whisks his
bush,



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*The timorous hare,*
*Grown so familiar with his frequent gues*
*Scarce shuns me.*

And perks his ears, and ſtamps and cries aloud,
With all the prettineſs of feign'd alarm,
And anger inſignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowſhip, as being void
Of ſympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendſhip both, that is not pleas'd
With ſight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happineſs augment his own.
The bounding fawn, that darts acroſs the glade
When none purſues, through mere delight of heart,
And ſpirits buoyant with exceſs of glee;
The horſe as wanton, and almoſt as fleet,
That ſkims the ſpacious meadow at full ſpeed,
Then ſtops and ſnorts, and, throwing high his heels,
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving firſt from one
That leads the dance a ſummons to be gay,
Though wild their ſtrange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet reſolv'd with one conſent
To give ſuch act and utt'rance as they may
To ecſtaſy too big to be ſuppreſs'd—

Theſe, and a thouſand images of bliſs,
With which kind nature graces ev'ry ſcene
Where cruel man defeats not her deſign,
Impart to the benevolent, who wiſh
All that are capable of pleaſure pleas'd,
A far ſuperior happineſs to their's,
The comfort of a reaſonable joy.

Man ſcarce had ris'n, obedient to his call
Who form'd him from the duſt, his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never king was ſince.
God ſet the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wond'ring ſtood
The new-made monarch, while before him paſs'd,
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures, ſummon'd from their various haunts
To ſee their ſov'reign, and confeſs his ſway.
Vaſt was his empire, abſolute his pow'r,
Or bounded only by a law, whoſe force
'Twas his ſublimeſt privilege to feel
And own—the law of univerſal love.
He rul'd with meekneſs, they obey'd with joy;
No cruel purpoſe lurk'd within his heart,
And no diſtruſt of his intent in their's.

So Eden was a ſcene of harmleſs ſport,
Where kindneſs on his part who rul'd the whole
Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cauſe for fear.
But ſin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,
That ſource of evils not exhauſted yet,
Was puniſh'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change
Thy groves and lawns then witneſs'd! Ev'ry heart,
Each animal of ev'ry name, conceiv'd
A jealouſy and an inſtinctive fear,
And, conſcious of ſome danger, either fled
Precipitate the loath'd abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in ſuch angry ſort,
As taught him, too, to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driv'n from Paradiſe; and in that hour
The ſeeds of cruelty, that ſince have ſwell'd
To ſuch gigantic and enormous growth,
Were ſown in human nature's fruitful ſoil.
Hence date the perſecution and the pain
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardleſs of their plaints. To make him ſport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,

Or his baſe gluttony, are cauſes good
And juſt, in his account, why bird and beaſt
Should ſuffer torture, and the ſtreams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impal'd.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Wag'd with defenceleſs innocence, while he,
Not ſatisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterneſs to death by pangs
Needleſs, and firſt torments ere he devours.
Now happieſt they that occupy the ſcenes
The moſt remote from his abhorr'd reſort,
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They fear'd, and, as his perfect image, lov'd.
The wilderneſs is their's, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,
Unviſited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrol'd;
Nor aſk his leave to ſlumber or to play.
Wo to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain!
The lion tells him—I am monarch here!
And, if he ſpare him, ſpares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through gen'rous ſcorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.

In meaſure, as by force of inſtinct drawn,
Or by neceſſity conſtrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man; thoſe in his fields,
Theſe at his crib, and ſome beneath his roof.
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He ſells protection.—Witneſs at his foot
The ſpaniel dying, for ſome venial fault,
Under diſſection of the knotted ſcourge—
Witneſs the patient ox, with ſtripes and yells
Driv'n to the ſlaughter, goaded, as he runs,
To madneſs; while the ſavage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic ſuff'rer's fury, ſpent
Upon the guiltleſs paſſenger o'erthrown.
He, too, is witneſs, nobleſt of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horſe:
With unſuſpecting readineſs he takes
His murd'rer on his back, and, puſh'd all day,
With bleeding ſides and flanks that heave for life,
To the far-diſtant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy ſhows who needs ſo much!
Does law, ſo jealous in the cauſe of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent?—None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boaſts
(As if barbarity were high deſert)

Th' inglorious feat, and, clamorous in praiſe
Of the poor brute, ſeems wiſely to ſuppoſe
The honours of his matchleſs horſe his own!
But many a crime, deem'd innocent on earth,
Is regiſter'd in heav'n; and theſe, no doubt,
Have each their record, with a curſe annex'd.
Man may diſmiſs compaſſion from his heart,
But God will never. When he charg'd the Jew
T' aſſiſt his foe's down-fallen beaſt to riſe;
And when the buſh-exploring boy, that ſeiz'd
The young, to let the parent bird go free;
Prov'd he not plainly that his meaner works
Are yet his care, and have an int'reſt all,
All, in the univerſal Father's love?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
The charter was conferr'd, by which we hold
The fleſh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on pow'r of life and death.
But read the inſtrument, and mark it well:
Th' oppreſſion of a tyrannous control
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through ſin,
Feed on the ſlain, but ſpare the living brute!

The Governor of all, himself to all
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear
The unfledg'd raven and the lion's whelp
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unassuag'd, has interpos'd,
Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
Th' injurious trampler upon nature's law,
That claims forbearance even for a brute.
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
And, prophet as he was, he might not strike
The blameless animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode. Her opportune offence
Sav'd him, or th' unrelenting seer had died.
He sees that human equity is slack
To interfere, though in so just a cause;
And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb
And helpless victims with a sense so keen
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,
And such sagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehears'd,
(If such who plead for Providence may seem
In modern eyes) shall make the doctrine clear.—

Where England, ſtretch'd towards the ſetting ſun,
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the weſtern wave,
Dwelt young Miſagathus; a ſcorner he
Of God and goodneſs, atheiſt in oftent,
Vicious in act, in temper ſavage fierce.
He journey'd; and his chance was as he went
To join a trav'ller, of far diff'rent note—
Evander, fam'd for piety, for years
Deſerving honour, but for wiſdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A ſtranger to the manners of the youth,
Whoſe face, too, was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,
O'er the green ſummit of the rocks, whoſe baſe
Beats back the roaring ſurge, ſcarce heard ſo high.
The charity that warm'd his heart was mov'd
At ſight of the man-monſter. With a ſmile
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
As fearful of offending whom he wiſh'd
Much to perſuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harſhly thunder'd forth or rudely preſs'd,
But, like his purpoſe, gracious, kind, and ſweet.
"And doſt thou dream," th' impenetrable man
Exclaim'd, "that me the lullabies of age,

" And fantáfies of dotards, ſuch as thou,
" Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
" Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
" Need no ſuch aids as ſuperſtition lends
" To ſteel their hearts againſt the dread of death."
He ſpoke, and to the precipice at hand
Puſh'd with a madman's fury. Fancy ſhrinks,
And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought
Of ſuch a gulph as he deſign'd his grave.
But, though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational, his ſteed
Declin'd the death, and wheeling ſwiftly round,
Or e'er his hoof had preſs'd the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, ſav'd againſt his will!
The frenzy of the brain may be redreſs'd
By med'cine well applied, but without grace
The heart's inſanity admits no cure.
Enrag'd the more, by what might have reform'd
His horrible intent, again he ſought
Deſtruction, with a zeal to be deſtroy'd,
With ſounding whip, and rowels died in blood.
But ſtill in vain. The Providence, that meant
A longer date to the far nobler beaſt,
Spar'd yet again th' ignobler, for his ſake.

And now, his proweſs prov'd, and his ſincere
Incurable obduracy evinc'd,
His rage grew cool; and, pleas'd perhaps t' have
earn'd
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
With looks of ſome complacence he reſum'd
His road, deriding much the blank amaze
Of good Evander, ſtill where he was left
Fixt motionleſs, and petrified with dread.
So on they far'd. Diſcourſe on other themes
Enſuing, ſeem'd t' obliterate the paſt;
And, tamer far for ſo much fury ſhown,
(As is the courſe of raſh and fiery men)
The rude companion ſmil'd, as if transform'd.
But 'twas a tranſient calm. A ſtorm was near,
An unſuſpected ſtorm. His hour was come.
The impious challenger of Pow'r divine
Was now to learn that Heav'n, though ſlow to wrath,
Is never with impunity defied.
His horſe, as he had caught his maſter's mood,
Snorting, and ſtarting into ſudden rage,
Unbidden, and not now to be control'd,
Ruſh'd to the cliff, and, having reach'd it, ſtood.
At once the ſhock unſeated him: he flew

Sheer o'er the craggy barrier; and, immers'd
Deep in the flood, found, when he ſought it not,
The death he had deſerv'd—and died alone!
So God wrought double juſtice; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to ſafe revenge.

I would not enter on my liſt of friends
(Tho' grac'd with poliſh'd manners and fine ſenſe,
Yet wanting ſenſibility) the man
Who needleſsly ſets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent ſtep may cruſh the ſnail
That crawls at ev'ning in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aſide, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathſome to the ſight,
And charg'd perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A viſitor unwelcome, into ſcenes
Sacred to neatneſs and repoſe—th' alcove,
The chamber, or refectory—may die:
A neceſſary act incurs no blame.
Not ſo when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltleſs of offence, they range the air,
Or take their paſtime in the ſpacious field:

There they are privileg'd; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Diſturbs th' economy of nature's realm,
Who, when ſhe form'd, deſign'd them an abode.
The ſum is this.—If man's convenience, health,
Or ſafety, interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and muſt extinguiſh their's.
Elſe they are all—the meaneſt things that are—
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the firſt,
Who, in his ſov'reign wiſdom, made them all.
Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your ſons
To love it too. The ſpring-time of our years
Is ſoon diſhonour'd and defil'd in moſt
By budding ills, that aſk a prudent hand
To check them. But, alas! none ſooner ſhoots,
If unreſtrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, moſt dev'liſh of them all.
Mercy to him that ſhows it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heav'n moves in pard'ning guilty man;
And he that ſhows none, being ripe in years,
And conſcious of the outrage he commits,
Shall ſeek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Diſtinguiſh'd much by reaſon, and ſtill more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exiſt but for our ſake,
Which, having ſerv'd us, periſh, we are held
Accountable; and God, ſome future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for th' abuſe
Of what he deems no mean or trivial truſt.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help than we on their's.
Their ſtrength, or ſpeed, or vigilance, were giv'n
In aid of our defects. In ſome are found
Such teachable and apprehenſive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Match'd with th' expertneſs of the brute's in their's,
Are oft-times vanquiſh'd and thrown far behind.
Some ſhow that nice ſagacity of ſmell,
And read with ſuch diſcernment, in the port
And figure of the man, his ſecret aim,
That oft we owe our ſafety to a ſkill
We could not teach, and muſt deſpair to learn.
But learn we might, if not too proud to ſtoop
To quadrupede inſtructors, many a good
And uſeful quality, and virtue too,
Rarely exemplified among ourſelves.

Attachment never to be wean'd, or chang'd
By any change of fortune: proof alike
Againſt unkindneſs, abſence, and neglect;
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp; and gratitude for ſmall
And trivial favours, laſting as the life,
And gliſt'ning even in the dying eye.

Man praiſes man. Deſert in arts or arms
Wins public honour; and ten thouſand ſit
Patiently preſent at a ſacred ſong,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear
(Oh wonderful effect of muſic's pow'r!)
Meſſiah's eulogy for Handel's ſake!
But leſs, methinks, than ſacrilege might ſerve—
(For, was it leſs? what heathen would have dar'd
To ſtrip Jove's ſtatue of his oaken wreath,
And hang it up in honour of a man?)
Much leſs might ſerve, when all that we deſign
Is but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a muſician's praiſe.
Remember Handel! Who, that was not born
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?

Yes—we remember him; and, while we praiſe
A talent ſo divine, remember too
That His moſt holy book from whom it came
Was never meant, was never us'd before,
To buckram out the mem'ry of a man.
But huſh!—the muſe perhaps is too ſevere;
And, with a gravity beyond the ſize
And meaſure of th' offence, rebukes a deed
Leſs impious than abſurd, and owing more
To want of judgment than to wrong deſign.
So in the chapel of old Ely Houſe,
When wand'ring Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William, and the news was freſh,
The ſimple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two ſtaves,
Sung to the praiſe and glory of King George!
—Man praiſes man; and Garrick's memʼry next,
When time hath ſomewhat mellow'd it, and made
The idol of our worſhip while he liv'd
The god of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world ſhall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his ſhrine.
The threatre, too ſmall, ſhall ſuffocate
Its ſqueez'd contents, and more than it admits

Shall ſigh at their excluſion, and return
Ungratified. For there ſome noble lord
Shall ſtuff his ſhoulders with king Richard's bunch,
Or wrap himſelf in Hamlet's inky cloak,
And ſtrut, and ſtorm, and ſtraddle, ſtamp, and ſtare,
To ſhow the world how Garrick did not act—
For Garrick was a worſhipper himſelf;
He drew the liturgy, and fram'd the rites
And ſolemn ceremonial of the day,
And call'd the world to worſhip on the banks
Of Avon, fam'd in ſong. Ah, pleaſant proof
That piety has ſtill in human hearts
Some place, a ſpark or two not yet extinct.
The mulb'ry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths;
The mulb'ry-tree ſtood centre of the dance;
The mulb'ry-tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulb'ry-tree
Supplied ſuch relics as devotion holds
Still ſacred, and preſerves with pious care.
So 'twas an hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,
And mirth without offence. No few return'd,
Doubtleſs, much edified, and all refreſh'd.
—Man praiſes man. The rabble, all alive,
From tippling-benches, cellars, ſtalls, and ſtyes,

Swarm in the ſtreets. The ſtateſman of the day,
A pompous and ſlow-moving pageant, comes.
Some ſhout him, and ſome hang upon his car,
To gaze in 's eyes, and bleſs him. Maidens wave
Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy:
While others, not ſo ſatisfied, unhorſe
The gilded equipage, and, turning looſe
His ſteeds, uſurp a place they well deſerve.
Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he ſav'd the ſtate?
No. Doth he purpoſe its ſalvation? No.
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out ev'ry crevice of the head
That is not ſound and perfect, hath in their's
Wrought this diſturbance. But the wane is near,
And his own cattle muſt ſuffice him ſoon.
Thus idly do we waſte the breath of praiſe,
And dedicate a tribute, in its uſe
And juſt direction ſacred, to a thing
Doom'd to the duſt, or lodg'd already there!
Encomium in old time was poet's work;
But, poets having laviſhly long ſince
Exhauſted all materials of the art,
The taſk now falls into the public hand;

And I, contented with an humble theme,
Have pour'd my ſtream of panegyric down
The vale of nature, where it creeps, and winds
Among her lovely works with a ſecure
And unambitious courſe, reflecting clear,
If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.
And I am recompens'd, and deem the toils
Of poetry not loſt, if verſe of mine
May ſtand between an animal and woe,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heav'n has heard for ages, have an end
Foretold by prophets, and by poets ſung,
Whoſe fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
The time of reſt, the promis'd ſabbath, comes.
Six thouſand years of ſorrow have well-nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and diſaſtrous courſe
Over a ſinful world; and what remains
Of this tempeſtuous ſtate of human things
Is merely as the working of a ſea
Before a calm, that rocks itſelf to reſt:
For He, whoſe car the winds are, and the clouds
The duſt that waits upon his ſultry march,

When ſin hath mov'd him, and his wrath is hot,
Shall viſit earth in mercy; ſhall deſcend,
Propitious, in his chariot pav'd with love;
And what his ſtorms have blaſted and defac'd
For man's revolt ſhall with a ſmile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too ſweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch:
Nor can the wonders it records be ſung
To meaner muſic, and not ſuffer loſs.
But, when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flow'rs,
Though poor in ſkill to rear them, lights at laſt
On ſome fair theme, ſome theme divinely fair,
Such is the impulſe and the ſpur he feels
To give it praiſe proportion'd to its worth,
That not t' attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labour, were a taſk more arduous ſtill.

Oh ſcenes ſurpaſſing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accompliſh'd bliſs! which who can ſee,
Though but in diſtant proſpect, and not feel
His ſoul refreſh'd with foretaſte of the joy?
Rivers of gladneſs water all the earth,

And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenneſs is paſt. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,
Or fertile only in its own diſgrace,
Exults to ſee its thiſtly curſe repeal'd.
The various ſeaſons woven into one,
And that one ſeaſon an eternal ſpring,
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion, and the libbard, and the bear
Graze with the fearleſs flocks; all baſk at noon
Together, or all gambol in the ſhade
Of the ſame grove, and drink one common ſtream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the ſerpent now: the mother ſees,
And ſmiles to ſee, her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the creſted worm,
To ſtroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worſhip man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place:
That creeping peſtilence is driv'n away;
The breath of heav'n has chas'd it. In the heart
No paſſion touches a diſcordant ſtring,

But all is harmony and love. Diſeaſe
Is not: the pure and uncontam'nate blood
Holds its due courſe, nor fears the froſt of age.
One ſong employs all nations; and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was ſlain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From diſtant mountains catch the flying joy;
Till, nation after nation taught the ſtrain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hoſanna round.
Behold the meaſure of the promiſe fill'd;
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a ſun the ſacred city ſhines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
And endleſs her increaſe. Thy rams are there,
*Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
And Saba's ſpicy groves, pay tribute there.
Praiſe is in all her gates: upon her walls,

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the ſons of Iſhmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic ſcripture here alluded to, may be reaſonably conſidered as repreſentatives of the Gentiles at large.

And in her ſtreets, and in her ſpacious courts,
Is heard ſalvation. Eaſtern Java there
Kneels with the native of the fartheſt weſt;
And Æthiopia ſpreads abroad the hand,
And worſhips. Her report has travell'd forth
Into all lands. From ev'ry clime they come
To ſee thy beauty and to ſhare thy joy,
O Sion! an aſſembly ſuch as earth
Saw never, ſuch as heav'n ſtoops down to ſee.

Thus heav'n-ward all things tend. For all were once
Perfect, and all muſt be at length reſtor'd.
So God has greatly purpos'd; who would elſe
In his diſhonour'd works himſelf endure
Diſhonour, and be wrong'd without redreſs.
Haſte, then, and wheel away a ſhatter'd world,
Ye ſlow-revolving ſeaſons! we would ſee
(A ſight to which our eyes are ſtrangers yet)
A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
And ſuffer for its crime; would learn how fair
The creature is that God pronounces good,
How pleaſant in itſelf what pleaſes him.
Here ev'ry drop of honey hides a ſting;

Worms wind themſelves into our ſweeteſt flow'rs;
And ev'n the joy that haply ſome poor heart
Derives from heav'n, pure as the fountain is,
Is ſullied in the ſtream, taking a taint
From touch of human lips, at beſt impure.
Oh for a world in principle as chaſte
As this is groſs and ſelfiſh! over which
Cuſtom and prejudice ſhall bear no ſway,
That govern all things here, ſhould'ring aſide
The meek and modeſt truth, and forcing her
To ſeek a refuge from the tongue of ſtrife
In nooks obſcure, far from the ways of men:—
Where violence ſhall never lift the ſword,
Nor cunning juſtify the proud man's wrong,
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears:—
Where he that fills an office ſhall eſteem
Th' occaſion it preſents of doing good
More than the perquiſite:—where law ſhall ſpeak
Seldom, and never but as wiſdom prompts
And equity; not jealous more to guard
A worthleſs form, than to decide aright:—
Where faſhion ſhall not ſanctify abuſe,
Nor ſmooth good-breeding (ſupplemental grace)
With lean performance ape the work of love!

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth;
And thou haſt made it thine by purchaſe ſince,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy ſaints proclaim thee king; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy ſaints proclaim thee king; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they ſee
The dawn of thy laſt advent, long-deſir'd,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for ſafety to the falling rocks.
The very ſpirit of the world is tir'd
Of its own taunting queſtion, aſk'd ſo long,
"Where is the promiſe of your Lord's approach?"
The infidel has ſhot his bolts away,
Till, his exhauſted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted ſhafts that have recoil'd,
And aims them at the ſhield of truth again.
The veil is rent, rent too by prieſtly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes;
And all the myſteries to faith propos'd,

Inſulted and traduc'd, are caſt aſide,
As uſeleſs, to the moles and to the bats.
They now are deem'd the faithful, and are prais'd,
Who, conſtant only in rejecting thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's ſake.
Blind, and in love with darkneſs! yet ev'n theſe
Worthy, compar'd with ſycophants, who knee
Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man!
So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare
The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,
And what they will. All paſtors are alike
To wand'ring ſheep, reſolv'd to follow none.
Two gods divide them all—Pleaſure and Gain:
For theſe they live, they ſacrifice to theſe,
And in their ſervice wage perpetual war
With conſcience and with thee. Luſt in their hearts,
And miſchief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other; ſtubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own diſgrace.
Thy prophets ſpeak of ſuch; and, noting down
The features of the laſt degen'rate times,
Exhibit ev'ry lineament of theſe.

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the reſt,
Due to thy laſt and moſt effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conqueſt of a world!

He is the happy man, whoſe life ev'n now
Shows ſomewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obſcure but tranquil ſtate,
Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to chooſe,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happineſs; beſpeak him one
Content indeed to ſojourn while he muſt
Below the ſkies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her buſy ſearch
Of objects, more illuſtrious in her view;
And, occupied as earneſtly as ſhe,
Though more ſublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She ſcorns his pleaſures, for ſhe knows them not;
He ſeeks not her's, for he has prov'd them vain.
He cannot ſkim the ground like ſummer birds
Purſuing gilded flies; and ſuch he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.

Therefore in contemplation is his bliſs,
Whoſe pow'r is ſuch, that whom ſhe lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a heav'n unſeen,
And ſhows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
Not ſlothful he, though ſeeming unemploy'd,
And cenſur'd oft as uſeleſs. Stilleſt ſtreams
Oft water faireſt meadows, and the bird
That flutters leaſt is longeſt on the wing.
Aſk him, indeed, what trophies he has rais'd,
Or what atchievements of immortal fame
He purpoſes, and he ſhall anſwer—None.
His warfare is within. There unfatigu'd
His fervent ſpirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains freſh triumphs o'er himſelf,
And never with'ring wreaths, compar'd with which
The laurels that a Cæſar reaps are weeds.
Perhaps the ſelf-approving haughty world,
That as ſhe ſweeps him with her whiſtling ſilks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if ſhe ſee,
Deems him a cypher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiſeleſs hours,
Of which ſhe little dreams. Perhaps ſhe owes
Her ſunſhine and her rain, her blooming ſpring
And plenteous harveſt, to the pray'r he makes,

When, Iſaac like, the ſolitary ſaint
Walks forth to meditate at even tide,
And think on her, who thinks not for herſelf.
Forgive him, then, thou buſtler in concerns
Of little worth, an idler in the beſt,
If, author of no miſchief and ſome good,
He ſeeks his proper happineſs by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.
Nor, though he tread the ſecret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much eaſe,
Account him an incumbrance on the ſtate,
Receiving benefits, and rend'ring none.
His ſphere though humble, if that humble ſphere
Shine with his fair example, and though ſmall
His influence, if that influence all be ſpent
In ſoothing ſorrow and in quenching ſtrife,
In aiding helpleſs indigence, in works
From which at leaſt a grateful few derive
Some taſte of comfort in a world of wo,
Then let the ſupercilious great confeſs
He ſerves his country, recompenſes well
The ſtate, beneath the ſhadow of whoſe vine
He ſits ſecure, and in the ſcale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a ſlighted, place.

The man, whoſe virtues are more felt than ſeen,
Muſt drop indeed the hope of public praiſe;
But he may boaſt what few that win it can—
That, if his country ſtand not by his ſkill,
At leaſt his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite refinement offers him in vain
Her golden tube, through which a ſenſual world
Draws groſs impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all th' offence.
Not that he peeviſhly rejects a mode
Becauſe that world adopts it. If it bear
The ſtamp and clear impreſſion of good ſenſe,
And be not coſtly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and, for decorum ſake,
Can wear it e'en as gracefully as ſhe.
She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the teſt of conſcience, and a heart
Not ſoon deceiv'd; aware that what is baſe
No poliſh can make ſterling; and that vice,
Though well perfum'd and elegantly dreſs'd,
Like an unburied carcaſe trick'd with flow'rs,
Is but a garniſh'd nuiſance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
So life glides ſmoothly and by ſtealth away,

More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient ſong; not vex'd with care
Or ſtain'd with guilt, beneficent, approv'd
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away! and ſo at laſt,
My ſhare of duties decently fulfill'd,
May ſome diſeaſe, not tardy to perform
Its deſtin'd office, yet with gentle ſtroke,
Diſmiſs me, weary, to a ſafe retreat
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
It ſhall not grieve me, then, that once, when call'd
To dreſs a Sofa with the flow'rs of verſe,
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light taſk; but ſoon, to pleaſe her more,
Whom flow'rs alone I knew would little pleaſe,
Let fall th' unfiniſh'd wreath, and rov'd for fruit;
Rov'd far, and gather'd much: ſome harſh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholeſome, well-digeſted; grateful ſome
To palates that can taſte immortal truth;
Inſipid elſe, and ſure to be deſpis'd.
But all is in his hand whoſe praiſe I ſeek.
In vain the poet ſings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.

'Tis not in artful meaſures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minſtrel's lyre,
To charm his ear, whoſe eye is on the heart;
Whoſe frown can diſappoint the proudeſt ſtrain,
Whoſe approbation—proſper even mine.

AN

# EPISTLE

TO

## JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH—five and twenty years ago—
Alas, how time eſcapes!—'tis even ſo—
With frequent intercourſe, and always ſweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour—and now we never meet!
As ſome grave gentleman in Terence ſays,
('Twas therefore much the ſame in ancient days)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But diſtance only cannot change the heart:
And, were I call'd to prove th' aſſertion true,
One proof ſhould ſerve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurr'd to kindle ſtrife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though num'rous once, reduc'd to few or none?
Can gold grow worthleſs that has ſtood the touch?
No—gold they ſeem'd, but they were never ſuch.

Horatio's ſervant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlour-door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overaw'd
Leſt he ſhould treſpaſs, begg'd to go abroad.
Go, fellow!—whither?—turning ſhort about—
Nay—ſtay at home—you're always going out.
'Tis but a ſtep, ſir, juſt at the ſtreet's end.—
For what?—An pleaſe you, ſir, to ſee a friend.
A friend! Horatio cry'd, and ſeem'd to ſtart—
Yea marry ſhalt thou, and with all my heart.—
And fetch my cloak: for, though the night be raw,
I'll ſee him too—the firſt I ever ſaw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But ſomewhat at that moment pinch'd him cloſe,
Elſe he was ſeldom bitter or moroſe.

Perhaps, his confidence juſt then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the ſpeech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good-humour gave it birth,
The harmleſs play of pleaſantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Beſpoke at leaſt a man that knew mankind.

But, not to moralize too much, and ſtrain
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments, verboſely ſpun)
One ſtory more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time an emp'ror, a wiſe man—
No matter where, in China or Japan—
Decreed that whoſoever ſhould offend
Againſt the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, ſhould ever after wear
But half a coat, and ſhow his boſom bare.
The puniſhment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.

Oh, happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary meaſure here;

Elſe, could a law like that which I relate
Once have the ſanction of our triple ſtate,
Some few that I have known in days of old,
Would run moſt dreadful riſk of catching cold;
While you, my friend, whatever wind ſhould blow,
Might traverſe England ſafely to and fro,
An honeſt man, cloſe-button'd to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

# TIROCINIUM:

OR,

# A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δε παιδειας ορθη τροφη.

PLATO.

Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νεων τροφα.

DIOG. LAERT.

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,

RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX,

THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,

THE FOLLOWING

# P O E M,

RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION

IN PREFERENCE TO

AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

*WILLIAM COWPER.*

*Olney, Nov.* 6, 1784.

# TIROCINIUM.

It is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the maſter of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form, indeed, th' aſſociate of a mind
Vaſt in its pow'rs, ethereal in its kind,
That form, the labour of almighty ſkill,
Fram'd for the ſervice of a free-born will,
Aſſerts precedence, and beſpeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the ſoul.
Here is the ſtate, the ſplendour, and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her the mem'ry fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from ev'ry diſtant age;
For her amaſſes an unbounded ſtore,
The wiſdom of great nations, now no more:

Though laden, not incumber'd with her ſpoil;
Laborious, yet unconſcious of her toil;
When copiouſly ſupplied, then moſt enlarg'd;
Still to be fed, and not to be ſurcharg'd.
For her the fancy, roving unconfin'd,
The preſent muſe of ev'ry penſive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To nature's ſcenes than nature ever knew.
At her command winds riſe and waters roar,
Again ſhe lays them ſlumb'ring on the ſhore;
With flow'r and fruit the wilderneſs ſupplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp ariſe.
For her the judgment, umpire in the ſtrife
That grace and nature have to wage through life,
Quick-ſighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed ſage preceptor to the will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the deciſion of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair ſun and his attendant earth?
And, when deſcending he reſigns the ſkies,
Why takes the gentler moon her turn to riſe,

Whom ocean feels through all his countleſs waves,
And owns her pow'r on ev'ry ſhore he laves?
Why do the ſeaſons ſtill enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their firſt career?
Spring hangs her infant bloſſoms on the trees;
Rock'd in the cradle of the weſtern breeze;
Summer in haſte the thriving charge receives
Beneath the ſhade of her expanded leaves,
Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at laſt in all their glowing hues.—
'Twere wild profuſion all, and bootleſs waſte,
Pow'r miſemploy'd, munificence miſplac'd,
Had not its author dignified the plan,
And crown'd it with the majeſty of man.
Thus form'd, thus plac'd, intelligent, and taught,
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
The wildeſt ſcorner of his Maker's laws
Finds in a ſober moment time to pauſe,
To preſs th' important queſtion on his heart,
"Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"
If man be what he ſeems—this hour a ſlave,
The next mere duſt and aſhes in the grave;
Endu'd with reaſon only to deſcry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye;

With paſſions, juſt that he may prove, with pain,
The force he ſpends againſt their fury vain;
And if, ſoon after having burnt, by turns,
With ev'ry luſt with which frail nature burns,
His being end where death diſſolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond—
Then he, of all that nature has brought forth,
Stands ſelf-impeach'd the creature of leaſt worth,
And, uſeleſs while he lives, and when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wiſdom of the ſkies.

Truths that the learn'd purſue with eager thought
Are not important always as dear bought,
Proving at laſt, though told in pompous ſtrains,
A childiſh waſte of philoſophic pains;
But truths on which depend our main concern,
That 'tis our ſhame and mis'ry not to learn,
Shine by the ſide of ev'ry path we tread
With ſuch a luſtre, he that runs may read.
'Tis true that, if to trifle life away
Down to the ſun-ſet of their lateſt day,
Then periſh on futurity's wide ſhore
Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,

Were all that Heav'n requir'd of human kind,
And all the plan their deſtiny deſign'd,
What none could reverence all might juſtly blame,
And man would breathe but for his Maker's ſhame.
But reaſon heard, and nature well peruſ'd,
At once the dreaming mind is diſabus'd.
If all we find poſſeſſing earth, ſea, air,
Reflect his attributes who plac'd them there,
Fulfil the purpoſe, and appear deſign'd
Proofs of the wiſdom of th' all-ſeeing mind,
'Tis plain the creature, whom he choſe t' inveſt
With kingſhip and dominion o'er the reſt,
Receiv'd his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the pow'r in which he ſtands array'd,
That firſt or laſt, hereafter if not here,
He too might make his author's wiſdom clear,
Praiſe him on earth, or, obſtinately dumb,
Suffer his juſtice in a world to come.
This once believ'd, 'twere logic miſapplied
To prove a conſequence by none denied,
That we are bound to caſt the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heav'nly truth,
That, taught of God, they may indeed be wiſe,
Nor, ignorantly wand'ring, miſs the ſkies.

In early days the conſcience has in moſt
A quickneſs, which in later life is loſt:
Preſerv'd from guilt by ſalutary fears,
Or, guilty, ſoon relenting into tears.
Too careleſs often, as our years proceed,
What friends we ſort with, or what books we read,
Our parents yet exert a prudent care
To feed our infant minds with proper fare;
And wiſely ſtore the nurſ'ry by degrees
With wholeſome learning, yet acquir'd with eaſe.
Neatly ſecur'd from being ſoil'd or torn
Beneath a pane of thin tranſlucent horn,
A book (to pleaſe us at a tender age
'Tis call'd a book, though but a ſingle page)
Preſents the pray'r the Saviour deign'd to teach,
Which children uſe, and parſons—when they preach.
Liſping our ſyllables, we ſcramble next
Through moral narrative, or ſacred text;
And learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marr'd, and who has ranſom'd, man.
Points which, unleſs the ſcripture made them plain,
The wiſeſt heads might agitate in vain.

Oh thou, whom, born on fancy's eager wing
Back to the ſeaſon of life's happy ſpring,
I pleas'd remember, and, while mem'ry yet
Holds faſt her office here, can ne'er forget;
Ingenious dreamer, in whoſe well-told tale
Sweet fiction and ſweet truth alike prevail;
Whoſe humʼrous vein, ſtrong ſenſe, and ſimple ſtyle,
May teach the gayeſt, make the graveſt ſmile;
Witty, and well employ'd, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables his ſlighted word;
I name thee not, leſt ſo deſpis'd a name
Should move a ſneer at thy deſerved fame;
Yet ev'n in tranſitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with ſober gray,
Revere the man, whoſe PILGRIM marks the road,
And guides the progreſs of the ſoul to God.
'Twere well with moſt, if books, that could engage
Their childhood, pleas'd them at a riper age;
The man, approving what had charm'd the boy,
Would die at laſt in comfort, peace, and joy;
And not with curſes on his heart, who ſtole
The gem of truth from his unguarded ſoul.
The ſtamp of artleſs piety, impreſs'd
By kind tuition on his yielding breaſt,

The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
Regards with ſcorn, though once receiv'd with awe;
And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies,
That babblers, call'd philoſophers, deviſe,
Blaſphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
Touch but his nature in its tender part,
Aſſert the native evil of his heart,
His pride reſents the charge, although the proof*
Riſe in his forehead, and ſtare rank enough:
Point to the cure, deſcribe a Saviour's cross
As God's expedient to retrieve his loſs,
The young apoſtate ſickens at the view,
And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere nature proves,
Oppos'd againſt the pleaſures nature loves!
While, ſelf-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
She longs to yield, no ſooner woo'd than won.
Try now the merits of this bleſt exchange
Of modeſt truth for wit's eccentric range.
Time was he clos'd, as he began, the day
With decent duty, not aſham'd to pray;

* See 2 Chron. ch. xxvi. ver. 19.

The practice was a bond upon his heart,
A pledge he gave for a conſiſtent part;
Nor could he dare preſumptuouſly diſpleaſe
A pow'r, confeſs'd ſo lately on his knees.
But now farewell all legendary tales—
The ſhadows fly, philoſophy prevails!
Pray'r to the winds, and caution to the waves;
Religion makes the free by nature ſlaves!
Prieſts have invented, and the world admir'd
What knaviſh prieſts promulgate as inſpir'd;
'Till reaſon, now no longer overaw'd,
Reſumes her pow'rs, and ſpurns the clumſy fraud;
And, common-ſenſe diffuſing real day,
The meteor of the goſpel dies away!
Such rhapſodies our ſhrewd diſcerning youth
Learn from expert inquirers after truth;
Whoſe only care, might truth preſume to ſpeak,
Is not to find what they profeſs to ſeek.
And thus, well-tutor'd only while we ſhare
A mother's lectures and a nurſe's care;
And taught at ſchools much mythologic ſtuff *,
But found religion ſparingly enough;

* The author begs leave to explain.—Senſible that, without ſuch knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor hiſtorians can be

Our early notices of truth, diſgrac'd,
Soon loſe their credit, and are all effac'd.

Would you your ſon ſhould be a ſot or dunce,
Laſcivious, headſtrong; or all theſe at once;
That, in good time, the ſtripling's finiſh'd taſte
For looſe expenſe and faſhionable waſte
Should prove your ruin and his own at laſt;
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childiſh in miſchief only and in noiſe,
Elſe of a manniſh growth, and five in ten
In infidelity and lewdneſs men.
There ſhall he learn, ere ſixteen winters old,
That authors are moſt uſeful pawn'd or ſold;
That pedantry is all that ſchools impart,
But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;
There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,
Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praiſe,
His counſellor and boſom-friend ſhall prove,
And ſome ſtreet-pacing harlot his firſt love.

taſted, or indeed underſtood, he does not mean to cenſure the pains that are taken to inſtruct a ſchool-boy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Chriſtian culture which leaves him ſhamefully ignorant of his own.

Schools, unleſs diſcipline were doubly ſtrong,
Detain their adoleſcent charge too long;
The management of tiros of eighteen
Is difficult, their puniſhment obſcene.
The ſtout tall captain, whoſe ſuperior ſize
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride, that ſcorns t' obey or to ſubmit,
With them is courage, his effront'ry wit.
His wild excurſions, window-breaking feats,
Robb'ry of gardens, quarrels in the ſtreets,
His hair-breadth 'ſcapes, and all his daring ſchemes,
Tranſport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.
In little boſoms ſuch achievements ſtrike
A kindred ſpark; they burn to do the like.
Thus, half accompliſh'd ere he yet begin
To ſhow the peeping down upon his chin;
And, as maturity of years comes on,
Made juſt th' adept that you deſign'd your ſon;
T' enſure the perſeverance of his courſe,
And give your monſtrous project all its force,
Send him to college. If he there be tam'd,
Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,

Where no regard of ord'nances is shewn
Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.
Some ſneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
Where neither ſtrumpets' charms, nor drinking bout,
Nor gambling practices, can find it out.
Such youths of ſpirit, and that ſpirit too,
Ye nurſ'ries of our boys, we owe to you!
Though from ourſelves the miſchief more proceeds,
For public ſchools 'tis public folly feeds.
The ſlaves of cuſtom and eſtabliſh'd mode,
With pack-horſe conſtancy we keep the road,
Crooked or ſtraight, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of our leaders bells.
To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is eaſier than to think:
And ſuch an age as our's baulks no expenſe,
Except of caution and of common-ſenſe;
Elſe, ſure, notorious fact and proof ſo plain
Would turn our ſteps into a wiſer train.
I blame not thoſe who with what care they can
O'erwatch the num'rous and unruly clan;
Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promiſe a work of which they muſt deſpair.

Have ye, ye ſage intendants of the whole,
An ubiquarian preſence and control—
Eliſha's eye, that, when Gehazi ſtray'd,
Went with him, and ſaw all the game he play'd?
Yes—ye are conſcious; and on all the ſhelves
Your pupils ſtrike upon, have ſtruck yourſelves.
Or, if by nature ſober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men;
Ye knew at leaſt, by conſtant proofs addreſs'd
To ears and eyes, the vices of the reſt.
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils, not to be endur'd, endure.
Left pow'r exerted, but without ſucceſs,
Should make the little ye retain ſtill leſs.
Ye once were juſtly fam'd for bringing forth
Undoubted ſcholarſhip and genuine worth;
And in the firmament of fame ſtill ſhines
A glory, bright as that of all the ſigns,
Of poets rais'd by you, and ſtateſmen, and divines.
Peace to them all! thoſe brilliant times are fled,
And no ſuch lights are kindling in their ſtead.
Our ſtriplings ſhine, indeed, but with ſuch rays
As ſet the midnight riot in a blaze;

And ſeem, if judg'd by their expreſſive looks,
Deeper in none than in their ſurgeon's books.

'Say, muſe, (for, education made the ſong,
No muſe can heſitate or linger long)
What cauſes move us, knowing, as we muſt,
That theſe *menageries* all fail their truſt,
To ſend our ſons to ſcout and ſcamper there,
While colts and puppies coſt us ſo much care?

Be it a weakneſs, it deſerves ſome praiſe;
We love the play-place of our early days—
The ſcene is touching, and the heart is ſtone
That feels not at that ſight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving ſkill,
The very name we carv'd, ſubſiſting ſtill;
The bench on which we ſat while deep employ'd,
Tho' mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet deſtroy'd:
The little ones, unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very ſpot;
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dextrous pat—'

The pleaſing ſpectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That, viewing it, we ſeem almoſt t' obtain
Our innocent ſweet ſimple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence firſt we ſtarted into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with ſuch unfailing ſway,
We feel it e'en in age, and at our lateſt day.
Hark! how the ſire of chits, whoſe future ſhare
Of claſſic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeneſs plac'd on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee;
And tells them, as he ſtrokes their ſilver locks,
That they muſt ſoon learn Latin, and to box;
Then, turning, he regales his liſt'ning wife
With all th' adventures of his early life;
His ſkill in coachmanſhip, and driving chaiſe,
In bilking tavern bills, or ſpouting plays;
What ſhifts he us'd, detected in a ſcrape,
How he was flogg'd, or had the luck t' eſcape;
What ſums he loſt at play, and how he ſold
Watch, ſeals, and all—till all his pranks are told.
Retracing thus his *frolics*, ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of ſhame)

He gives the local bias all its ſway;
Reſolves that where he play'd his ſons ſhall play,
And deſtines their bright genius to be ſhown
Juſt in the ſcene where he diſplay'd his own.
The meek and bathful boy will ſoon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought;
The rude will ſcuffle through with eaſe enough,
Great ſchools ſuit beſt the ſturdy and the rough.
Ah, happy deſignation, prudent choice,
Th' event is ſure; expect it, and rejoice!
Soon ſee your wiſh fulfill'd in either child—
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excus'd th' incumbrance of more ſolid worth,
Are beſt diſpos'd of where with moſt ſucceſs
They may acquire that confident addreſs,
Thoſe habits of profuſe and lewd expenſe,
That ſcorn of all delights but thoſe of ſenſe,
Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,
With ſo much reaſon all expect from them,
But families of leſs illuſtrious fame,
Whoſe chief diſtinction is their ſpotleſs name,

Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,
Must shine by true desert, or none at all—
What dream they of, that with so little care
They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?
They dream of little Charles or William grac'd
With wig prolix, down-flowing to his waist;
They see th' attentive crowds his talents draw,
They hear him speak—the oracle of law!
The father, who designs his babe a priest,
Dreams him episcopally such at least;
And, while the playful jockey scours the room
Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
In fancy sees him more superbly ride
In coach with purple lin'd, and mitres on its side.
Events improbable and strange as these,
Which only a parental eye foresees,
A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
But how? resides such virtue in that air
As must create an appetite for pray'r?
And will it breathe into him all the zeal
That candidates for such a prize should feel,
To take the lead and be the foremost still
In all true worth and literary skill?

" Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught
" The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
" Church-ladders are not always mounted beſt
" By learned clerks and Latiniſts profeſs'd.
" Th' exalted prize demands an upward look,
" Not to be found by poring on a book.
" Small ſkill in Latin, and ſtill leſs in Greek,
" Is more than adequate to all I ſeek.
" Let erudition grace him or not grace,
" I give the bauble but the ſecond place;
" His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
" Subſiſt and centre in one point—a friend!
" A friend, whate'er he ſtudies or neglects,
" Shall give him conſequence, heal all defects.
" His intercourſe with peers, and ſons of peers—
" There dawns the ſplendour of his future years;
" In that bright quarter his propitious ſkies
" Shall bluſh betimes, and there his glory riſe.
" *Your Lordſhip*, and *Your Grace!* what ſchool can
" teach
" A rhet'ric equal to thoſe parts of ſpeech?
" What need of Homer's verſe or Tully's proſe,
" Sweet interjections! if he learn but thoſe?

" Let rev'rend churls his ignorance rebuke,
" Who ſtarve upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,
" The parſon knows enough who knows a duke."—
Egregious purpoſe! worthily begun
In barb'rous proſtitution of your ſon;
Preſs'd on *his* part by means that would diſgrace
A ſcriv'ner's clerk or footman out of place,
And ending, if at laſt its end be gain'd,
In ſacrilege, in God's own houſe profan'd!
It may ſucceed; and, if his ſins ſhould call
For more than common puniſhment, it ſhall;
The wretch ſhall riſe, and be the thing on earth
Leaſt qualified in honour, learning, worth,
To occupy a ſacred, awful poſt,
In which the beſt and worthieſt tremble moſt.
The *royal letters* are a thing of courſe—
A king, that would, might recommend his horſe;
And deans, no doubt, and chapters, with one voice,
As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
Behold your biſhop! well he plays his part—
Chriſtian in name, and infidel in heart,
Ghoſtly in office, earthly in his plan,
A ſlave at court, elſewhere a lady's man!

Dumb as a ſenator, and, as a prieſt,
A piece of mere church-furniture at beſt;
To live eſtrang'd from God his total ſcope,
And his end ſure, without one glimpſe of hope!
But, fair although and feaſible it ſeem,
Depend not much upon your golden dream;
For Providence, that ſeems concern'd t' exempt
The hallow'd bench from abſolute contempt,
In ſpite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a ſeat or two for worth and grace;
And therefore 'tis, that, though the ſight be rare,
We ſometimes ſee a Lowth or Bagot there.
Beſides, ſchool-friendſhips are not always found,
Though fair in promiſe, permanent and ſound;
The moſt diſint'reſted and virtuous minds,
In early years connected, time unbinds;
New ſituations give a diff'rent caſt
Of habit, inclination, temper, taſte;
And he, that ſeem'd our counterpart at firſt,
Soon ſhows the ſtrong ſimilitude revers'd.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make miſtakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are at beſt but pretty buds unblown,
Whoſe ſcent and hues are rather gueſs'd than known;

Each dreams that each is juſt what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When diſpoſition, like a ſail unfurl'd,
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
If, therefore, ev'n when honeſt in deſign,
A boyiſh friendſhip may ſo ſoon decline,
'Twere wiſer ſure t' inſpire a little heart
With juſt abhorrence of ſo mean a part,
Than ſet your ſon to work at a vile trade
For wages ſo unlikely to be paid.

Our public hives of puerile reſort,
That are of chief and moſt approv'd report,
To ſuch baſe hopes, in many a ſordid ſoul,
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whoſe proud pretenſions paſs
Unqueſtion'd, though the jewel be but glaſs—
That with a world, not often over-nice,
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice;
Or rather a groſs compound, juſtly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealouſy, and pride—
Contributes moſt perhaps t' enhance their fame;
An emulation is its ſpecious name.

Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel;
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in their's the ſcholar's prize.
The ſpirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns;
Each vainly magnifies his own ſucceſs,
Reſents his fellow's, wiſhes it were leſs,
Exults in his miſcarriage if he fail,
Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
And labours to ſurpaſs him day and night,
Leſs for improvement than to tickle ſpite.
The ſpur is powerful, and I grant its force;
It pricks the genius forward in its courſe,
Allows ſhort time for play, and none for ſloth;
And, felt alike by each, advances both:
But judge, where ſo much evil intervenes,
The end, though plauſible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, claſſical deſert
Againſt an heart deprav'd and temper hurt;
Hurt, too, perhaps for life; for early wrong,
Done to the nobler part, affects it long;
And you are ſtaunch indeed in learning's cauſe,
If you can crown a diſcipline, that draws
Such miſchiefs after it, with much applauſe.

Connexion form'd for int'reſt, and endear'd
By ſelfiſh views, thus cenſur'd and caſhier'd;
And emulation, as engend'ring hate,
Doom'd to a no leſs ignominious fate;
The props of ſuch proud ſeminaries fall,
The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.
Great ſchools rejected, then, as thoſe that ſwell
Beyond a ſize that can be managed well,
Shall royal inſtitutions miſs the bays,
And ſmall academies win all the praiſe?
Force not my drift beyond its juſt intent,
I praiſe a ſchool as Pope a government;
So take my judgment in his language dreſs'd—
"Whate'er is beſt adminiſter'd is beſt."
Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well;
Then aſk not, Whether limited or large?
But, Watch they ſtrictly, or neglect their charge?
If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,
While *morals* languiſh, a deſpis'd concern,
The great and ſmall deſerve one common blame
Diff'rent in ſize, but in effect the ſame.
Much zeal in virtue's cauſe all teachers boaſt,
Though motives of mere lucre ſway the moſt;

Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there the game they ſeek is eaſieſt found;
Though there, in ſpite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are moſt abundant too.
If ſhrewd, and of a well-conſtructed brain,
Keen in purſuit, and vig'rous to retain,
Your ſon come forth a prodigy of ſkill;
As, whereſoever taught, ſo form'd, he will;
The pedagogue, with ſelf-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praiſe as his due ſhare.
But, if, with all his genius, he betray,
Not more intelligent than looſe and gay,
Such vicious habits as diſgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame;
Though want of due reſtraint alone have bred
The ſymptoms that you ſee with ſo much dread;
Unenvy'd there, he may ſuſtain alone
The whole reproach—the fault was all his own!

Oh 'tis a ſight to be with joy perus'd,
By all whom ſentiment has not abus'd;
New-fangled ſentiment, the boaſted grace
Of thoſe who never feel in the right place;

A ſight ſurpaſs'd by none that we can ſhow,
Though Veſtris on one leg ſtill ſhine below;
A father bleſt with an ingenuous ſon—
Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.
How!—turn again to tales long ſince forgot,
Æſop, and Phædrus, and the reſt?—Why not?
He will not bluſh that has a father's heart,
To take in childiſh plays a childiſh part;
But bends his ſturdy back to any toy
That youth takes pleaſure in, to pleaſe his boy:
Then why reſign into a ſtranger's hand
A taſk as much within your own command,
That God and nature, and your int'reſt too,
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
Why hire a lodging in a houſe unknown
For one whoſe tend'reſt thoughts all hover round
your own?
This ſecond weaning, needleſs as it is,
How does it lac'rate both your heart and his!
Th' indented ſtick, that loſes day by day
Notch after notch, till all are ſmooth'd away,
Bears witneſs, long ere his diſmiſſion come,
With what intenſe deſire he wants his home.

But, though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to anſwer in the proof,
Harmleſs, and ſafe, and nat'ral, as they are,
A diſappointment waits him even there:
Arriv'd, he feels an unexpected change;
He bluſhes, hangs his head, is ſhy and ſtrange,
No longer takes, as once, with fearleſs eaſe,
His fav'rite ſtand between his father's knees,
But ſeeks the corner of ſome diſtant ſeat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And, leaſt familiar where he ſhould be moſt,
Feels all his happieſt privileges loſt.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by abſence chill'd into reſpect.
Say, what accompliſhments, at ſchool acquir'd,
Brings he, to ſweeten fruits ſo undeſir'd?
Thou well deſerv'ſt an alienated ſon,
Unleſs thy conſcious heart acknowledge—none;
None that, in thy domeſtic ſnug receſs,
He had not made his own with more addreſs,
Though ſome perhaps that ſhock thy feeling mind,
And better never learn'd, or left behind.
Add too, that, thus eſtrang'd, thou can'ſt obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again;

That here begins with moſt that long complaint
Of filial frankneſs loſt, and love grown faint,
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
A parent pours into regardleſs ears.

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees
By ſlender threads, and ſwinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and ſore diſgrace
The boughs in which are bred th' unſeemly race;
While ev'ry worm induſtriouſly weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
So num'rous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of every ſprightly boy;
Imaginations noxious and perverſe,
Which admonition can alone diſperſe.
Th' encroaching nuiſance aſks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhauſt the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,
At ſtated hours, his freakiſh thoughts engage;
Ev'n in his paſtimes he requires a friend
To warn, and teach him ſafely to unbend,

O'er all his pleaſures gently to preſide,
Watch his emotions, and control their tide;
And, levying thus, and with an eaſy ſway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
T' impreſs a value, not to be eras'd,
On moments ſquander'd elſe, and running all to waſte.
And ſeems it nothing in a father's eye
That unimprov'd thoſe many moments fly?
And is he well content his ſon ſhould find
No nouriſhment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs and nouns declin'd?
For ſuch is all the mental food purvey'd
By public hacknies in the ſchooling trade;
Who feed a pupil's intellect with ſtore
Of ſyntax, truly, but with little more;
Diſmiſs their cares when they diſmiſs their flock—
Machines themſelves, and govern'd by a clock.
Perhaps a father, bleſt with any brains,
Would deem it no abuſe, or waſte of pains,
T' improve this diet, at no great expenſe,
With ſav'ry truth and wholeſome common ſenſe;
To lead his ſon, for proſpects of delight,
To ſome not ſteep, though philoſophic, height,

Thence to exhibit to his wond'ring eyes
Yon circling worlds, their diſtance, and their ſize,
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To ſhow him, in an inſect or a flow'r,
Such microſcopic proof of ſkill and pow'r,
As, hid from ages paſt, God now diſplays
To combat atheiſts with in modern days;
To ſpread the earth before him, and commend,
With deſignation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the moſt remote;
To teach his heart to glow with gen'rous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame;
And, more than all, with commendation due
To ſet ſome living worthy in his view,
Whoſe fair example may at once inſpire
A wiſh to copy what he muſt admire.
Such knowledge, gain'd betimes, and which appears,
Though ſolid, not too weighty for his years,
Sweet in itſelf, and not forbidding ſport,
When health demands it, of athletic ſort,

Would make him—what ſome lovely boys have
been,
And more than one, perhaps, that I have ſeen—
An evidence and reprehenſion both
Of the mere ſchool-boy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man profeſſionally tied,
With all thy faculties elſewhere applied,
Too buſy to intend a meaner care
Than how t' enrich thyſelf, and next thine heir;
Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)
But poor in knowledge, having none t' impart;—
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad;
His ſprightly mingled with a ſhade of ſad;
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men;
No jeſter, and yet lively in diſcourſe,
His phraſe well choſen, clear, and full of force;
And his addreſs, if not quite French in eaſe,
Not Engliſh ſtiff, but frank, and form'd to pleaſe;
Low in the world, becauſe he ſcorns its arts;
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts;
Unpatroniz'd, and therefore little known;
Wiſe for himſelf and his few friends alone—

In him thy well-appointed proxy ſee,
Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee;
Prepar'd by taſte, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy ſon, to ſtrike his genius forth;
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove
The force of diſcipline when back'd by love;
To double all thy pleaſure in thy child,
His mind inform'd, his morals undefil'd.
Safe under ſuch a wing, the boy ſhall ſhow
No ſpots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his ſpeech with meanneſſes, deſign'd
By footman Tom for witty and refin'd.
There, in his commerce with the liv'ried herd,
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd;
For, ſince (ſo faſhion dictates) all, who claim
An higher than a mere plebeian fame,
Find it expedient, come what miſchief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
(And they that can afford th' expenſe of more,
Some half a dozen, and ſome half a ſcore)
Great cauſe occurs to ſave him from a band
So ſure to ſpoil him, and ſo near at hand;
A point ſecur'd, if once he be ſupplied
With ſome ſuch Mentor always at his ſide.

Are ſuch men rare? perhaps they would abound
Were occupation eaſier to be found,
Were education, elſe ſo ſure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable ſcale,
And ſchools, that have out-liv'd all juſt eſteem,
Exchang'd for the ſecure domeſtic ſcheme.—
But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou haſt ſenſe enough to prize the pearl,
And, as thou would'ſt th' advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Reſpect, as is but rational and juſt,
A man deem'd worthy of ſo dear a truſt.
Deſpis'd by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly than the ſame neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains,
That inſtant, upon all his future pains;
His leſſons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all th' inſtructions of thy ſon's beſt friend
Are a ſtream choak'd, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to ſolitary meals;
But recollect that he has ſenſe and feels;
And that, poſſeſſor of a ſoul refin'd,
An upright heart, and cultivated mind,

His poſt not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And, if admitted at thy board he ſit,
Account him no juſt mark for idle wit;
Offend not him, whom modeſty reſtrains
From repartee, with jokes that he diſdains;
Much leſs transfix his feelings with an oath;
Nor frown, unleſs he vaniſh with the cloth.—
And, truſt me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hir'd or bound to teach;
Much traſh unutter'd, and ſome ills undone,
Through rev'rence of the cenſor of thy ſon.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with exceſs, and with diſcourſe obſcene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
The world accounts an honourable man,
Becauſe forſooth thy courage has been tried
And ſtood the teſt, perhaps on the wrong ſide;
Though thou hadſt never grace enough to prove
That any thing but vice could win thy love;—
Or haſt thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chain'd to the routs that ſhe frequents for life;

Who, juſt when induſtry begins to ſnore,
Flies, wing'd with joy, to ſome coach-crowded door;
And thrice in ev'ry winter thronga thine own
With half the chariots and ſedans in town,
Thyſelf meanwhile e'en ſhifting as thou may'ſt;
Not very ſober though, not very chaſte;—
Or is thine houſe, though leſs ſuperb thy rank,
If not a ſcene of pleaſure, a mere blank,
And thou at beſt, and in thy ſob'reſt mood,
A trifler vain, and empty of all good;—
Though money for thyſelf thou canſt have none,
Hear nature plead, ſhow mercy to thy ſon.
Sav'd from his home, where ev'ry day brings forth
Some miſchief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a diſtant ſpot,
Within ſome pious paſtor's humble cot,
Where vile example, (yours I chiefly mean,
The moſt ſeducing and the oft'neſt ſeen)
May never more be ſtamp'd upon his breaſt,
Nor yet perhaps incurably impreſs'd:—
Where early reſt makes early riſing ſure,
Diſeaſe or comes not, or finds eaſy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain;
Or, if it enter, ſoon ſtarv'd out again:—

Where all th' attention of his faithful hoſt,
Diſcreetly limited to two at moſt,
May raiſe ſuch fruits as ſhall reward his care,
And not at laſt evaporate in air:—
Where, ſtillneſs aiding ſtudy, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclin'd,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleaſures paſt, or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at laſt
In ſettled habit and decided taſte.—
But whom do I adviſe? the faſhion-led,
Th' incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead!
Whom care and cool deliberation ſuit
Not better much than ſpectacles a brute;
Who, if their ſons ſome ſlight tuition ſhare,
Deem it of no great moment whoſe, or where;
Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay t' have any of their own.
But, courage, man! methought the muſe replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide:
The oſtrich, fillieſt of the feather'd kind,
And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs, incautious, to the duſt,
Forgetful that the foot may cruſh the truſt;

And, while on public nurs'ries they rely,
Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
Irrational in what they thus prefer,
No few, that would ſeem wiſe, reſemble her.
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
May here and there prevent erroneous choice;
And ſome perhaps, who, buſy as they are,
Yet make their progeny their deareſt care,
(Whoſe hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
Their offspring, left upon ſo wild a beach)
Will need no ſtreſs of argument t' enforce
Th' expedience of a leſs advent'rous courſe:
The reſt will ſlight thy counſel, or condemn;
But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*.

To you, then, tenants of life's middle ſtate,
Securely plac'd between the ſmall and great,
Whoſe character, yet undebauch'd, retains
Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,
Who, wiſe yourſelves, deſire your ſons ſhould learn
Your wiſdom and your ways—to you I turn.
Look round you on a world perverſely blind;
See what contempt is fall'n on human kind;

See wealth abus'd, and dignities miſplac'd,
Great titles, offices, and truſts diſgrac'd,
Long lines of anceſtry, renown'd of old,
Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold;
See Bedlam's cloſetted and hand-cuff'd charge
Surpaſs'd in frenzy by the mad at large;
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without ſtudy made;
Churchmen, in whoſe eſteem their bleſt employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who, far enough from furniſhing their ſhelves
With goſpel lore, turn infidels themſelves;
See womanhood deſpis'd, and manhood ſham'd
With infamy too nauſeous to be nam'd,
Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,
Civited fellows, ſmelt ere they are ſeen,
Elſe coarſe and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curſes, and with nonſenſe hung,
Now flush'd with drunk'neſs, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a ſample of laſt night's regale;
See volunteers in all the vileſt arts,
Men well endow'd, of honourable parts,

Deſign'd by nature wiſe, but ſelf-made fools;—
All theſe, and more like theſe, were bred at ſchools!
And, if it chance, as ſometimes chance it will,
That, though ſchool-bred, the boy be virtuous ſtill;
Such rare exceptions, ſhining in the dark,
Prove, rather than impeach, the juſt remark:
As here and there a twinkling ſtar deſcried
Serves but to ſhow how black is all beſide.
Now look on him, whoſe very voice in tone
Juſt echoes thine, whoſe features are thine own,
And ſtroke his poliſh'd cheek of pureſt red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And ſay—My boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,
When thou, tranſplanted from thy genial home,
Muſt find a colder ſoil and bleaker air,
And truſt for ſafety to a ſtranger's care;
What character, what turn thou wilt aſſume
From conſtant converſe with I know not whom;
Who there will court thy friendſhip, with what views,
And, artleſs as thou art, whom thou wilt chooſe;
Though much depends on what thy choice ſhall be,
Is all chance medley, and unknown to me.—

Can'ſt thou, the tear juſt trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful riſque foreſeen forbids;
Free, too, and under no conſtraining force,
Unleſs the ſway of cuſtom warp thy courſe;
Lay ſuch a ſtake upon the loſing ſide,
Merely to gratify ſo blind a guide?
Thou can'ſt not! Nature, pulling at thine heart,
Condemns th' unfatherly, th' imprudent part.
Thou would'ſt not, deaf to Nature's tend'reſt plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling ſea,
Nor ſay, *Go thither*, conſcious that there lay
A brood of aſps, or quickſands in his way;
Then, only govern'd by the ſelf-ſame rule
Of nat'ral pity, ſend him not to ſchool.
No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
Thyſelf in miniature, thy fleſh, thy bone?
And hop'ſt thou not ('tis ev'ry father's hope)
That, ſince thy ſtrength muſt with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need ſome comfort to aſſuage
Health's laſt farewell, a ſtaff of thine old age,
That then, in recompenſe of all thy cares,
Thy child ſhall ſhow reſpect to thy gray hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?

Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compaſs that good end, forecaſt the means.
His heart, now paſſive, yields to thy command;—
Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.
If thou deſert thy charge, and throw it wide,
Nor heed what gueſts there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and baſe
Supplant thee in it, and uſurp thy place.
But, if thou guard its ſacred chambers ſure
From vicious inmates and delights impure,
Either his gratitude ſhall hold him faſt,
And keep him warm and filial to the laſt;
Or, if he prove unkind (as who can ſay
But, being man, and therefore frail, he may?)
One comfort yet ſhall cheer thine aged heart—
Howe'er he ſlight thee, thou haſt done thy part.

Oh barb'rous! would'ſt thou with a Gothic hand
Pull down the ſchools—what!—all the ſchools i' th' land;
Or throw them up to liv'ry-nags and grooms,
Or turn them into ſhops and auction rooms?
A captious queſtion, ſir, (and your's is one)
Deſerves an anſwer ſimilar, or none.

Would'ſt thou, poſſeſſor of a flock, employ
(Appriz'd that he is ſuch) a careleſs boy,
And feed him well, and give him handſome pay,
Merely to ſleep, and let them run aſtray?
Survey our ſchools and colleges, and ſee
A ſight not much unlike my ſimile.
From education, as the leading cauſe,
The public character its colour draws;
Thence the prevailing manners take their caſt,
Extravagant or ſober, looſe or chaſte.
And, though I would not advertiſe them yet,
Nor write on each—*This Building to be Let,*
Unleſs the world were all prepar'd t' embrace
A plan well worthy to ſupply their place;
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the morals clean,
(Forgive the crime) I wiſh them, I confeſs,
Or better manag'd, or encourag'd leſs.

ON

# THE DEATH

OF

# MRS. THROCKMORTON'S

# BULFINCH.

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Ye nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapleſs fav'rites ſhed,
O ſhare Maria's grief!
Her fav'rite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Aſſaſſin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus ſtrays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he ſprung,
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whiſtle bleſt,
Well-taught, he all the ſounds expreſs'd
Of flagelet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the fleeceſt mole;
His boſom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the ſkies,
When piping winds ſhall ſoon ariſe
To ſweep up all the dew.

Above, below, in all the houſe,
Dire foe, alike to bird and mouſe,
No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage ſupported ſtood,
On props of ſmootheſt-ſhaven wood,
Large-built and lattic'd well.

Well-lattic'd—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of ſteel or braſs,
For Bully's plumage ſake,
But ſmooth with wands from Ouſe's ſide,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
The ſwains their baſkets make.

Night veil'd the pole. All ſeem'd ſecure.
When led by inſtinct ſharp and ſure,
Subſiſtence to provide,

A beaſt forth-ſallied on the ſcout,
Long-back'd, long-tail'd, with whiſker'd ſnout,
And badger-colour'd hide.

He, ent'ring at the ſtudy door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And ſomething in the wind
Conjectur'd, ſniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food, chiefly, for the mind.

Juſt then, by adverſe fate impreſs'd,
A dream diſturb'd poor Bully's reſt;
In ſleep he ſeem'd to view
A rat, faſt-clinging to the cage,
And, ſcreaming at the ſad preſage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and ſcent,
Right to his mark the monſter went—
Ah, Muſe! forbear to ſpeak
Minute the horrors that enſued;
His teeth were ſtrong, the cage was wood—
He left poor Bully's beak.

He left it—but he ſhould have ta'en
That beak, whence iſſued many a ſtrain
Of ſuch mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For filencing ſo ſweet a throat,
Faſt ſet within his own.

Maria weeps—the Muſes mourn—
So, when by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' ſide
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell;
His head alone remain'd to tell
The cruel death he died.

---

## THE ROSE.

The roſe had been waſh'd, juſt waſh'd in a ſhower,
Which Mary to Anna convey'd,
The plentiful moiſture incumber'd the flower,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it ſeem'd to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret,
On the flouriſhing buſh where it grew.

I haſtily ſeiz'd it, unfit as it was,
For a noſegay, ſo dripping and drown'd,
And ſwinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I ſnapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And ſuch, I exclaim'd, is the pitileſs part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardleſs of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to ſorrow reſign'd.

This elegant roſe, had I ſhaken it leſs,
Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile,
And the tear that is wip'd with a little addreſs,
May be follow'd perhaps by a ſmile.

# THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

Maria! I have ev'ry good
For thee wish'd many a time,
Both sad, and in a cheerful mood,
But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
More prudent, or more sprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour, then, not yet possess'd,
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already blest,
To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part;
Full bliss is bliss divine;
There dwells some wish in ev'ry heart,
And, doubtless, one in thine.

That wiſh, on ſome fair future day,
Which fate ſhall brightly gild,
('Tis blameleſs, be it what it may!)
I wiſh it all fulfill'd.

## ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all thoſe luckleſs brains,
That, to the wrong ſide leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning.

Ah why, ſince oceans, rivers, ſtreams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In conſtant exhalations,

Why, ſtooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, haſt thou ſtol'n away
A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewleſs air,
It floats a vapour now,
Impell'd through regions denſe and rare,
By all the winds that blow.

Ordain'd, perhaps, ere ſummer flies,
Combin'd with millions more,
To form an iris in the ſkies,
Though black and foul before.

Illuſtrious drop! and happy then
Beyond the happieſt lot,
Of all that ever paſs'd my pen,
So ſoon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if ſuch be thy deſign,
To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may ſhine
With equal grace below.

# CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON.

She came—ſhe is gone—we have met—
And meet perhaps never again;
The ſun of that moment is ſet,
And ſeems to have riſen in vain.
Catharina has fled like a dream—
(So vaniſhes pleaſure, alas!)
But has left a regret and eſteem
That will not ſo ſuddenly paſs.

The laſt evening-ramble we made,
Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progreſs was often delay'd
By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paus'd under many a tree,
And much ſhe was charm'd with a tone
Leſs ſweet to Maria and me,
Who had witneſs'd ſo lately her own.

My numbers that day ſhe had ſung,
And gave them a grace ſo divine,
As only her muſical tongue
Could infuſe into numbers of mine.
The longer I heard, I eſteem'd
The work of my fancy the more,
And e'en to myſelf never ſeem'd
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleaſures of London exceed
In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
Would feel herſelf happier here;
For the cloſe-woven arches of limes,
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are ſweeter to her many times
Than all that the city can ſhow.

So it is, when the mind is endued
With a well-judging taſte from above,
Then, whether embelliſh'd or rude,
'Tis nature alone that we love.
The achievements of art may amuſe,
May even our wonder excite,

But groves, hills, and vallies, diffuſe
A laſting, a ſacred delight.

Since then in the rural receſs
Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it ſtill be her lot to poſſeſs
The ſcene of her ſenſible choice
To inhabit a manſion remote
From the clatter of ſtreet-pacing ſteeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
To meaſure the life that ſhe leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home,
And with ſcenes that new rapture inſpire
As oft as it ſuits her to roam,
She will have juſt the life ſhe prefers,
With little to wiſh or to fear,
And ours will be pleaſant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

# THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

## A TALE.

A HERMIT (or if chance you hold
That title now too trite and old),
A man, once young, who lived retired
As hermit could have well deſired,
His hours of ſtudy cloſed at laſt,
And finiſh'd his conciſe repaſt,
Stoppled his cruſe, replaced his book
Within its cuſtomary nook,
And, ſtaff in hand, ſet forth to ſhare
The ſober cordial of ſweet air,
Like Iſaac, with a mind applied
To ſerious thought at evening-tide,
Autumnal rains had made it chill,
And from the trees that fringed his hill
Shades ſlanting at the cloſe of day
Chill'd more his elſe delightful way.
Diſtant a little mile he ſpied
A weſtern bank's ſtill ſunny ſide,

And right toward the favour'd place
Proceeding with his nimbleſt pace,
In hope to baſk a little yet,
Juſt reach'd it when the ſun was ſet.
Your hermit, young and jovial firſt
Learns ſomething from whate'er occurs—
And hence, he ſaid, my mind computes
The real worth of man's purſuits.
His object choſen, wealth or fame,
Or other ſublunary game,
Imagination to his view
Preſents it deck'd with ev'ry hue
That can ſeduce him not to ſpare
His pow'rs of beſt exertion there,
But youth, health, vigour, to expend
On ſo deſirable an end.
Ere long, approach life's evening ſhades,
The glow that fancy gave it fades;
And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
Which firſt engag'd him in the chaſe.
True, anſwer'd an angelic guide,
Attendant at the ſenior's ſide—
But whether all the time it coſt
To urge the fruitleſs chaſe be loſt,

Muſt be decided by the worth
Of that which call'd his ardour forth.
Trifles purſu'd, whate'er th' event,
Muſt cauſe him ſhame or diſcontent;
A vicious object ſtill is worſe,
Succeſsful there, he wins a curſe;
But he, whom e'en in life's laſt ſtage
Endeavours laudable engage,
Is paid, at leaſt in peace of mind,
And ſenſe of having well deſign'd;
And if, ere he attain his end,
His ſun precipitate deſcend,
A brighter prize than that he meant
Shall recompenſe his mere intent.
No virtuous wiſh can bear a date
Either too early or too late.

# THE FAITHFUL FRIEND.

The green-houſe is my ſummer-ſeat;
My ſhrubs diſplac'd from that retreat
Enjoy'd the open air;
Two goldfinches, whoſe ſprightly ſong
Had been their mutual ſolace long,
Liv'd happy priſ'ners there.

They ſang, as blithe as finches ſing
That flutter looſe on golden wing,
And frolic where they lift:
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
And, therefore, never miſs'd.

But nature works in ev'ry breaſt;
Inſtinct is never quite ſuppreſs'd;
And Dick felt ſome deſires,
Which, after many an effort vain,
Inſtructed him at length to gain
A paſs between his wires.

The open windows ſeem'd to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight;
But Tom was ſtill confin'd;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too gen'rous and ſincere
To leave his friend behind.

For, ſettling on his grated roof,
He chirp'd and kiſs'd him, giving proof
That he deſir'd no more;
Nor would forſake his cage at laſt,
Till gently ſeiz'd, I ſhut him faſt,
A pris'ner as before.

Oh ye, who never knew the joys
Of Friendſhip, ſatisfied with noiſe,
Fandango, ball and rout!
Bluſh when I tell you how a bird
A priſon, with a friend, preferr'd
To liberty without.

# PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

## A FABLE.

I SHALL not aſk Jean Jacques Rouſſeau *,
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold diſcourſe, at leaſt, in fable;
And ev'n the child, who knows no better,
Than to interpret by the letter,
A ſtory of a cock and bull,
Muſt have a moſt uncommon ſkull.

It chanc'd then, on a winter's day,
But warm and bright, and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a deſign
To foreſtall ſweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copſe, and grove,
Aſſembled on affairs of love,

* It was one of the whimſical ſpeculations of this philoſopher, that all fables which aſcribe reaſon and ſpeech to animals ſhould be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, againſt the evidence of his ſenſes?

And with much twitter and much chatter,
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bulfinch, who could boaſt
More years and wiſdom than the moſt,
Entreated, op'ning wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to ſpeak;
And, ſilence publicly enjoin'd,
Deliver'd briefly thus his mind.
My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The ſubject upon which we meet;
I fear we ſhall have winter yet.
A Finch, whoſe tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and ſatin poll,
A laſt year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied.
Methinks the gentleman, quoth ſhe,
Oppoſite in the apple-tree,
By his good will, would keep us ſingle
Till yonder heav'n and earth ſhall mingle,
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado,
My dear Dick Redcap, what ſay you?

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning ſhort round, ſtrutting and ſideling,
Atteſted, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their ſentiments ſo well expreſs'd,
Influenc'd mightily the reſt,
All pair'd, and each pair built a neſt.
But though the birds were thus in haſte,
The leaves came on not quite ſo faſt,
And deſtiny, that ſometimes bears
An aſpect ſtern on man's affairs,
Not altogether ſmil'd on theirs.
The wind, of late breath'd gently forth,
Now ſhifted eaſt and eaſt by north;
Bare trees and ſhrubs but ill, you know,
Could ſhelter them from wind or ſnow,
Stepping into their neſts, they paddled,
Themſelves were chill'd, their eggs were addled;
Soon ev'ry father bird and mother
Grew quarrelſome, and peck'd each other,
Parted without the leaſt regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learn'd, in future, to be wiſer,
Than to neglect a good adviſer.

INSTRUCTION.

Miſſes! the tale that I relate
This leſſon ſeems to carry—
Chooſe not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

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# THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field through which I often paſs,
Thick overſpread with moſs and ſilky graſs,
Adjoining cloſe to Kilwick's echoing wood,
Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapleſs brood,
Reſerv'd to ſolace many a neighb'ring 'ſquire,
That he may follow them through brake and briar,
Contuſion hazarding of neck or ſpine,
Which rural gentlemen call ſport divine.

A narrow brook, by ruſhy banks conceal'd,
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;
Oaks interſperſe it, that had once a head,
But now wear creſts of oven-wood inſtead;
And where the land ſlopes to its wat'ry bourn,
Wide yawns a gulph beſide a ragged thorn;
Bricks line the ſides, but ſhiver'd long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below;
A hollow ſcoop'd, I judge in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wint'ry gueſt, is fed;
Nor autumn yet had bruſh'd from ev'ry ſpray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away;
But corn was hous'd, and beans were in the ſtack,
Now, therefore, iſſued forth the ſpotted pack,
With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
With a whole gamut fill'd of heav'nly notes,
For which, alas! my deſtiny ſevere,
Though ears ſhe gave me two, gave me no ear.

The ſun, accompliſhing his early march,
His lamp now planted on heav'n's topmoſt arch,
When, exerciſe and air my only aim,
And heedleſs whither, to that field I came,

Ere yet with ruthleſs joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
Or with the high-rais'd horn's melodious clang
All Kilwick * and all Dingle-derry * rang.
Sheep graz'd the field; ſome with ſoft boſom preſs'd
The herb as ſoft, while nibbling ſtray'd the reſt;
Nor noiſe was heard but of the haſty brook,
Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
All ſeem'd ſo peaceful, that from them convey'd
To me, their peace by kind contagion ſpread.
But when the huntſman, with diſtended cheek,
'Gan make his inſtrument of muſic ſpeak,
And from within the wood that craſh was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burſt appear'd,
The ſheep recumbent, and the ſheep that graz'd,
All huddling into phalanx, ſtood and gaz'd,
Admiring, terrified, the novel ſtrain,
Then cours'd the field around, and cours'd it round again;
But, recollecting with a ſudden thought,
That flight in circles urg'd advanc'd them nought,

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Eſq.

They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.
The man to solitude accustom'd long,
Perceives in ev'ry thing that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees,
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flow'rs rejoicing all;
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largeness of the skies;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of ev'ry loco-motive kind;
Birds of all feather, beasts of ev'ry name,
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have, all, articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.
This truth premis'd was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.
Awhile they mus'd; surveying ev'ry face,
Thou hadst suppos'd them of superior race;
Their periwigs of wool, and fears combin'd,
Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,

That ſage they ſeem'd, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at laſt they puzzle out;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
When thus a mutton, ſtatelier than the reſt,
Aram, the ewes and wethers, ſad, addreſs'd.

Friends! we have liv'd too long. I never heard
Sounds ſuch as theſe, ſo worthy to be fear'd.
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at laſt a vent,
And from their priſon-houſe below ariſe,
With all theſe hideous howlings to the ſkies,
I could be much compos'd, nor ſhould appear
For ſuch a cauſe to feel the ſlighteſt fear.
Yourſelves have ſeen, what time the thunders roll'd
All night, me reſting quiet in the fold.
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
I could expound the melancholy tone;
Should deem it by our old companion made,
The aſs; for he, we know, has lately ſtray'd,
And being loſt, perhaps, and wand'ring wide,
Might be ſuppos'd to clamour for a guide.
But ah! thoſe dreadful yells what ſoul can hear,
That owns a carcaſe, and not quake for fear?

Dæmons produce them doubtleſs, brazen-claw'd
And fang'd with braſs the dæmons are abroad;
I hold it, therefore, wiſeſt and moſt fit,
That, life to ſave, we leap into the pit.

Him anſwer'd then his loving mate and true,
But more diſcreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.

How? leap into the pit our life to ſave?
To ſave our life leap all into the grave?
For can we find it leſs? Contemplate firſt
The depth how awful! falling there, we burſt;
Or ſhould the brambles, interpos'd, our fall
In part abate, that happineſs were ſmall;
For with a race like theirs no chance I ſee
Of peace or eaſe to creatures clad as we.
Meantime, noiſe kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whoſe it may,
And ruſh thoſe other ſounds, that ſeem by tongues
Of dæmons utter'd, from whatever lungs,
Sounds are but ſounds, and till the cauſe appear,
We have at leaſt commodious ſtanding here;
Come, fiend, come fury, giant, monſter, blaſt
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at laſt.

While thus ſhe ſpake, I fainter heard the peals,
For Reynard, cloſe attended at his heels,

By panting dog, tir'd man, and ſpatter'd horſe,
Through mere good fortune, took a diff'rent courſe.
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following that led me to my own abode,
Much wonder'd that the ſilly ſheep had found
Such cauſe of terror in an empty ſound,
So ſweet to huntſman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of deſp'rate ſteps. The darkeſt day
(Live till to-morrow) will have paſs'd away.

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## THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

The noon was ſhady, and ſoft airs
Swept Ouſe's ſilent tide,
When, ſcap'd from literary cares,
I wander'd on his ſide.

My ſpaniel, prettieſt of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs *, adorn'd with ev'ry grace,
That ſpaniel found for me)

Now wanton'd loſt in flags and reeds,
Now ſtarting into ſight
Purſued the ſwallow o'er the meads
With ſcarce a flower flight.

It was the time when Ouſe diſplay'd
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent ſurvey'd,
And one I wiſh'd my own.

With cane extended far I ſought
To ſteer it cloſe to land;
But ſtill the prize, tho' nearly caught,
Eſcaped my eager hand.

*Beau* mark'd my unſucceſsful pains
With fixt conſid'rate face,
And puzzling ſat his puppy brains
To comprehend the caſe.

* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

But with a chirrup clear and ſtrong,
Diſperſing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the ſtream.

My ramble finiſh'd, I return'd.
*Beau* trotting far before
The floating wreath again diſcern'd,
And plunging left the ſhore.

I ſaw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient ſwim to meet
My quick approach, and ſoon he dropp'd
The treaſure at my feet.

Charm'd with the ſight, the world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed,
My dog ſhall mortify the pride
Of man's ſuperior breed;

But, chief, myſelf I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To ſhow a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all.

# VISIT TO A FAVOURITE FIELD.

The poplars are fell'd, and adieu to the ſhade,
And the whiſpering ſound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer, and ſing in their leaves,
Nor the Ouſe, on its ſurface, their image receives.

Twelve years had elaps'd ſince I laſt took a view
Of my favourite field, and the place where they grew;
When, behold, on their ſides, in the graſs they were laid,
And I ſate on the trees under which I had ſtray'd.

The blackbird has ſought out another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a ſcreen from the heat;
And the ſcene where his notes have oft charm'd me before,
Shall reſound with his ſmooth-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all haſting away,
And I muſt myſelf lie as lowly as they,
With a turf at my breaſt, and a ſtone at my head,
Ere another ſuch grove riſes up in its ſtead.

The change both my heart and my fancy employs;
I reflect on the frailty of man and his joys;
Short-liv'd as we are, yet our pleaſures, we ſee,
Have a ſtill ſhorter date, and die ſooner than we.

---

FROM

## THE ANNUAL BILL OF MORTALITY,

### NORTHAMPTON.

—Placidiq; ibi demum morte quievit. *Virg.*
Then calm at length he breath'd his ſoul away.

" Oh moſt delightful hour by man
" Experienc'd here below;
" The hour that terminates his ſpan,
" His folly and his woe.

" Worlds ſhould not bribe me back to tread
" Again life's dreary waſte;
" To ſee my days again o'erſpread
" With all the gloomy paſt.

" My home, henceforth, is in the ſkies,
" Earth, ſeas, and ſun adieu;
" All heaven unfolded to my eyes,
" I have no ſight for you."

Thus ſpake Aſpatio, firm poſſeſt
Of faith's ſupporting rod;
Then breath'd his ſoul into its reſt,
The boſom of his God.

He was a man among the few
Sincere on Virtue's ſide,
And all his ſtrength from ſcripture drew,
To hourly uſe apply'd.

That rule he priz'd, by that he fear'd,
He hated, hop'd, and lov'd,
Nor ever frown'd, or ſad appear'd,
But when his heart had rov'd.

For he was frail as thou or I,
And evil felt within,
But when he felt it, heav'd a ſigh,
And loath'd the thought of ſin.

Such liv'd Aſpatio, and at laſt,
Call'd up from earth to heav'n,
The gulph of death triumphant paſs'd,
By gales of bleſſing driven.

His joys be MINE, each reader cries,
When my laſt hour arrives:
They ſhall be yours, my verſe replies,
Such ONLY be your lives.

THE

# DIVERTING HISTORY

OF

# JOHN GILPIN;

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

---

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's ſpouſe ſaid to her dear—
Though wedded we have been
Theſe twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have ſeen.

To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaiſe and pair.

My ſiſter, and my ſiſter's child,
Myſelf, and children three,
Will fill the chaiſe; ſo you muſt ride
On horſeback after we.

He ſoon replied—I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are ſhe, my deareſt dear,
Therefore it ſhall be done.

I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horſe to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin—That's well ſaid;
And, for that wine is dear,
We will be furniſh'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiſs'd his loving wife;
O'erjoy'd was he to find
That, though on pleaſure ſhe was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaiſe was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, leſt all
Should ſay that ſhe was proud.

So three doors off the chaiſe was ſtay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious ſouls, and all agog
To daſh through thick and thin!

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk ſo glad,
The ſtones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapſide were mad.

John Gilpin at his horſe's ſide
Seiz'd faſt the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haſte to ride,
But ſoon came down again;

For ſaddle-tree ſcarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he ſaw
Three cuſtomers come in.

So down he came; for loſs of time,
Although it griev'd him ſore,
Yet loſs of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the cuſtomers
Were ſuited to their mind,
When Betty ſcreaming came down ſtairs—
"The wine is left behind!"

Good lack! quoth he—yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewiſe,
In which I bear my truſty ſword
When I do exerciſe.

Now miſtreſs Gilpin (careful ſoul!)
Had two ſtone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that ſhe lov'd,
And keep it ſafe and ſound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each ſide,
To make his balance true.

Then, over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now ſee him mounted once again
Upon his nimble ſteed,
Full ſlowly, pacing o'er the ſtones
With caution and good heed!

But, finding ſoon a ſmoother road
Beneath his well-ſhod feet,
The ſnorting beaſt began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his ſeat.

So, Fair and ſoftly, John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop ſoon,
In ſpite of curb and rein.

So, ſtooping down, as needs he muſt
Who cannot ſit upright,
He graſp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horſe, who never in that ſort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig!—
He little dreamt, when he ſet out,
Of running ſuch a rig!

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like ſtreamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At laſt it flew away.

Then might all people well diſcern
The bottles he had ſlung;
A bottle ſwinging at each ſide,
As hath been ſaid or ſung.

The dogs did bark, the children ſcream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And ev'ry ſoul cried out—Well done!
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame ſoon ſpread around—
He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thouſand pound!

And ſtill, as faſt as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were ſhatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Moſt piteous to be ſeen,
Which made his horſe's flanks to ſmoke
As they had baſted been.

But ſtill he ſeem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle brac'd;
For all might ſee the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waiſt.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
And till he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wond'ring much
To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house—
They all at once did cry;
The dinner waits, and we are tir'd:
Said Gilpin—So am I!

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclin'd to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow ſwift he flew,
Shot by an archer ſtrong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my ſong.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And ſore againſt his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horſe at laſt ſtood ſtill.

The calender, amaz'd to ſee
His neighbour in ſuch trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accoſted him:—

What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you muſt and ſhall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all.

Now Gilpin had a pleaſant wit,
And lov'd a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guiſe he ſpoke:—

I came becauſe your horſe would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will ſoon be here—
They are upon the road.

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a ſingle word,
But to the houſe went in;

Whence ſtraight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worſe for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and, in his turn,
Thus ſhow'd his ready wit—
My head is twice as big as your's,
They therefore needs muſt fit.

But let me ſcrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And ſtop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry caſe.

Said John—It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would ſtare
If wife ſhould dine at Edmonton
And I ſhould dine at Ware!

So, turning to his horſe, he ſaid—
I am in haſte to dine;
'Twas for your pleaſure you came here,
You ſhall go back for mine.

Ah, luckleſs ſpeech, and bootleſs boaſt!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he ſpake, a braying aſs
Did ſing moſt loud and clear;

Whereat his horſe did ſnort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig!
He loſt them ſooner than at firſt—
For why?—they were too big!

Now, miſtreſs Gilpin, when ſhe ſaw
  Her huſband poſting down
Into the country far away,
  She pull'd out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth ſhe ſaid
  That drove them to the Bell—
This ſhall be your's when you bring back
  My huſband ſafe and well.

The youth did ride, and ſoon did meet
  John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to ſtop,
  By catching at his rein;

But, not performing what he meant,
  And gladly would have done,
The frighted ſteed he frighted more,
  And made him faſter run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went poſt-boy at his heels!—
The poſt-boy's horſe right glad to miſs
  The lumb'ring of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus ſeeing Gilpin fly,
With poſt-boy ſcamp'ring in the rear,
They rais'd the hue and cry:—

Stop thief! ſtop thief!—a highwayman!
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that paſs'd that way
Did join in the purſuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in ſhort ſpace;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And ſo he did—and won it too!—
For he got firſt to town;
Nor ſtopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us ſing—Long live the king,
And Gilpin long live he;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to ſee!

# THE YEARLY DISTRESS,

OR

## TITHING TIME AT STOCK IN ESSEX:

VERSES addreſſed to a Country Clergyman complaining the diſagreeableneſs of the day annually appointed for receiving the Dues at the Parſonage.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jeſt,
To laugh it would be wrong,
The troubles of a worthy prieſt
The burden of my ſong.

This prieſt he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of the year,
But oh! it cuts him like a ſithe
When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of fright and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a ſigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In ſooth, the ſorrow of ſuch days
Is not to be expreſs'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike diſtreſs'd.

Now all, unwelcome, at his gates
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
He trembles at the ſight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Inſtead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a ſcore.

'And how does miſs and madam do,
'The little boy and all?'
'All tight and well. And how do you,
'Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?'

The dinner comes, and down they ſit:
Were e'er ſuch hungry folk?
There's little talking, and no wit;
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his noſe upon his ſleeve,
One ſpits upon the floor,
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpiſh ſtill as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the buſy time begins:
'Come, neighbours, we muſt wag—'
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of froſt,
And one of ſtorms of hail,
And one of pigs that he has loſt
By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, 'A rarer man than you
In pulpit none ſhall hear:
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
You ſell it plaguy dear.'

Oh, why are farmers made ſo coarſe,
Or clergy made ſo fine!
A kick that ſcarce would move a horſe
May kill a ſound divine.

Then let the boobies ſtay at home;
'Twould coſt him, I dare ſay,
Leſs trouble taking twice the ſum,
Without the clowns that pay.

## LINES ADDRESSED TO

## Dr. DARWIN,

Author of "THE BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two Poets,* (poets, by report,
Not oft ſo well agree)
Sweet Harmoniſt of Flora's court!
Conſpire to honour Thee.

They beſt can judge a poet's worth
Who oft themſelves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth
By labours of their own.

We, therefore, pleas'd, extol thy ſong,
Though various yet complete,
Rich in embelliſhment as ſtrong,
And learn'd as it is ſweet.

No envy mingles with our praiſe,
Though, could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
They would—they muſt at thine!

* Alluding to the poem by Mr. Hayley, which accompanied this.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of friendſhip's cloſeſt tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundiced eye;

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,
And howſoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for Thee,
Unworthy of his own.

---

ON

## Mrs. MONTAGUE's
## FEATHER-HANGINGS.

The Birds put off their ev'ry hue
To dreſs a room for Montague.
The Peacock ſends his heav'nly dyes,
His *rainlows* and his *ſtarry eyes*;
The Pheaſant, plumes, which round infold
His mantling neck with downy gold;
The Cock his arch'd tail's azure ſhow;
And, river-blanch'd, the Swan, his ſnow.

All tribes beſide of Indian name,
That gloſſy ſhine or vivid flame,
Where riſes, and where ſets the day,
Whate'er they boaſt of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither daſhing ſhow'r
Nor blaſts that ſhake the dripping bow'r
Shall drench again or diſcompoſe,
But ſcreen'd from ev'ry ſtorm that blows,
It boaſts a ſplendour ever new,
Safe with protecting Montague.
To the ſame patroneſs reſort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong Genius, from whoſe forge of thought
Forms riſe, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigour move,
Like Pallas ſpringing arm'd from Jove—
Imagination ſcatt'ring round
Wild roſes over furrow'd ground,
Which Labour of his frown beguile,
And teach Philoſophy a ſmile—
Wit flaſhing on Religion's ſide,
Whoſe fires to ſacred Truth applied,

The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrude on human notice more,
Like ſun-beams on the golden height
Of ſome tall temple playing bright—
Well-tutor'd Learning, from his books
Diſmiſs'd with grave, not haughty, looks,
*Their* order on his ſhelves exact
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that to which he keeps confin'd
The various treaſures of his mind—
All theſe to Montague's repair,
Ambitious of a ſhelter there.
There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For ſtormy troubles loudeſt roar
Around their flight who higheſt ſoar)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine ſafe without a fear to fade.
She thus maintains divided ſway
With yon bright Regent of the day;
The Plume and Poet both we know
Their luſtre to his influence owe,
And ſhe the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both Poet ſaves and Plume from fading.

# SONNET

ADDRESSED TO

## HENRY COWPER, Esq.

On his emphatical and intereſting delivery of the Defence of WARREN HASTINGS, Eſq. in the Houſe of Lords.

COWPER, whoſe ſilver voice, taſk'd ſometimes hard,
Legends prolix delivers in the ears
(Attentive when thou read'ſt) of England's Peers,
Let verſe at length yield thee thy juſt reward.
Thou waſt not heard with drowſy diſregard,
Expending late on all that length of plea
Thy gen'rous pow'rs, but ſilence honour'd thee
Mute as e'er gaz'd on Orator or Bard.
Thou art not voice alone, but haſt beſide
Both heart and head; and could'ſt with muſic ſweet
Of attic phraſe and ſenatorial tone,
Like thy renown'd Forefathers, far and wide
Thy fame diffuſe, prais'd not for utt'rance meet
Of *others'* ſpeech, but magic of *thy own.*

## THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad ſeaſon of ſpring,
  Aſleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but ſing,
  So pleaſant it ſeem'd as I lay.
I dream'd that on ocean afloat,
  Far hence to the weſtward I ſail'd,
While the billows high-lifted the boat,
  And the freſh-blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the ſteerage a woman I ſaw,
  Such at leaſt was the form that ſhe wore,
Whoſe beauty impreſs'd me with awe,
  Ne'er taught me by woman before.
She ſat, and a ſhield at her ſide
  Shed light like a ſun on the waves,
And ſmiling divinely, ſhe cry'd—
  I go to make Freemen of Slaves.—

Then raiſing her voice to a ſtrain
  The ſweeteſt that ear ever heard,

She ſung of the ſlave's broken chain
Wherever her glory appear'd.
Some clouds which had over us hung
Fled, chas'd by her melody clear,
And methought while ſhe Liberty ſung,
'Twas Liberty only to hear.

Thus ſwiftly dividing the flood
To a ſlave-cultur'd iſland we came,
Where a Demon, her enemy, ſtood—
Oppreſſion his terrible name.
In his hand, as the ſign of his ſway,
A ſcourge hung with laſhes he bore,
And ſtood looking out for his prey
From Africa's ſorrowful ſhore.

But ſoon as approaching the land
That goddeſs-like woman he view'd,
The ſcourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his ſubjects imbrued.
I ſaw him both ſicken and die,
And the moment the monſter expir'd
Heard ſhouts that aſcended the ſky
From thouſands with rapture inſpir'd.

Awaking, how could I but muſe
  At what ſuch a dream ſhould betide?
But ſoon my ear caught the glad news
  Which ſerv'd my weak thought for a guide—
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves
  For the hatred ſhe ever has ſhown
To the black-ſceptred rulers of ſlaves,
  Reſolves to have none of her own.

## VERSES

PRINTED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE

## YEARLY BILL OF MORTALITY

OF THE TOWN OF NORTHAMPTON,

Dec. 21, 1787.

Pallida Mors æquo pulſat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres.

Pale Death with equal foot ſtrikes wide the door
Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons ſaw ſmoothly run
  The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All *these*, life's rambling journey done,
  Have found their home—the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
  Than in foregoing years?
Did famine, or did plague prevail,
  That ſo much death appears?

No; theſe were vigorous as their fires,
  Nor plague nor famine came;
This annual tribute Death requires,
  And never waves his claim.

Like crowded foreſt-trees we ſtand,
  And ſome are mark'd to fall;
The axe will ſmite at God's command,
  And ſoon ſhall ſmite us all.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,
  With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtleſs have I ſeen;
  I paſs'd—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth
  With which I charge my page;
A worm is in the bud of youth,
  And at the root of age.

No preſent health can health inſure
For yet an hour to come;
No med'cine, though it often cure,
Can always balk the tomb.

And oh! that (humble as my lot,
And ſcorn'd as is my ſtrain *)
Theſe truths, though known, too much forgot,
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your Clerk, with all his heart;
And, ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,
And anſwer all—Amen!

* John Cox, Pariſh Clerk of Northampton.

## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR ——.

—Placidiq; ibi demum morte quievit. *Virg.*
Then calm at length he breath'd his ſoul away.

" Oh moſt delightful hour by man
" Experienc'd here below;
" The hour that terminates his ſpan,
" His folly and his woe.

" Worlds ſhould not bribe me back to tread
" Again life's dreary waſte;
" To ſee my days again o'erſpread
" With all the gloomy paſt.

" My home, henceforth, is in the ſkies,
" Earth, ſeas, and ſun adieu;
" All heaven unfolded to my eyes,
" I have no ſight for you."

Thus ſpake Aſpatio, firm poſſeſt
Of faith's ſupporting rod;
Then breath'd his ſoul into its reſt,
The boſom of his God.

He was a man among the few
  Sincere on Virtue's ſide,
And all his ſtrength from ſcripture drew,
  To hourly uſe apply'd.

That rule he priz'd, by that he fear'd,
  He hated, hop'd, and lov'd,
Nor ever frown'd, or ſad appear'd,
  But when his heart had rov'd.

For he was frail as thou or I,
  And evil felt within,
But when he felt it, heav'd a ſigh,
  And loath'd the thought of ſin.

Such liv'd Aſpatio, and at laſt,
  Call'd up from earth to heav'n,
The gulph of death triumphant paſs'd,
  By gales of bleſſing driven.

His joys be MINE, each reader cries,
  When my laſt hour arrives:
They ſhall be yours, my verſe replies,
  Such ONLY be your lives.

# INSCRIPTION

FOR THE TOMB OF

## Mr. HAMILTON.

PAUSE here, and think: a monitory rhime
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.
Conſult Life's ſilent clock, thy bounding vein;
Seems it to ſay—Health, here, has long to reign?
Haſt thou the vigour of thy youth? an eye
That beams delight? an heart untaught to ſigh?—
Yet fear. Youth, ofttimes, healthful and at eaſe,
Anticipates a day it never ſees,
And many a tomb, like Hamilton's, aloud
Exclaims, "Prepare thee for an early ſhroud!"

# THE POPLAR-FIELD.

THE poplars are fell'd, farewell to the ſhade
And the whiſpering ſound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and ſing in the leaves,
Nor Ouſe on his boſom their image receives.

Twelve years have elaps'd ſince I laſt took a view
Of my favourite field and the bank where they grew;
And now in the graſs behold they are laid,
And the tree is my ſeat that once lent me a ſhade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a ſcreen from the heat,
And the ſcene where his melody charm'd me before
Reſounds with his ſweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all haſting away,
And I muſt ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breaſt and a ſtone at my head,
Ere another ſuch grove ſhall ariſe in its ſtead.

'Tis a fight to engage me if any thing can,
To muſe on the periſhing pleaſures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I ſee,
Have a being leſs durable even than he.

## IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

Populeæ cecidit gratiſſima copia ſilvæ,
Conticuêre ſuſurri, omniſque evanuit umbra.
Nullæ jam levibus ſe miſcent frondibus auræ
Et nulla in fluvio ramorum ludit imago.

Hei mihi! bis ſenos dum luctû torqueor annos
His cogor ſilvis ſuetoque carere receſſû,
Cum ſerò rediens ſtrataſque in gramine cernens
Inſedi arboribus ſub queîs errare ſolebam.

Ah ubi nunc merulæ cantus? Felicior illum
Silva tegit, duræ nondum permiſſa bipenni;
Scilicet exuſtos colles campoſque patentes
Odit, et indignans et non rediturus abivit.

Sed qui ſucciſas doleo ſuccidar et ipſe,
Et priùs huic parilis quàm creverit altera ſilva
Flebor, et, exequiis parvis donatus, habebo
Defixum lapidem tumulique cubantis acervum.

Tam ſubitò periiſſe videns tam digna manere
Agnoſco humanas ſortes et triſtia fata—
Sit licàt ipſe brevis, volucrique ſimillimus umbræ,
Eſt homini brevior citiùſque obitura voluptas.

## EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er purſue,
Nor ſwifter greyhound follow,
Whoſe foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor e'er heard huntſman's hallo',

Old Tiney, ſurlieſt of his kind,
Who, nurs'd with tender care,
And to domeſtic bounds confin'd,
Was ſtill a wild Jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance ev'ry night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread
And milk, and oats, and ſtraw;
Thiſtles, or lettuces inſtead,
With ſand to ſcour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regal'd,
On pippins' ruſſet peel,
And, when his juicy ſalads fail'd,
Slic'd carrot pleas'd him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn
Whereon he lov'd to bound,
To ſkip and gambol like a fawn,
And ſwing his rump around.

His friſking was at evening hours,
For then he loſt his fear,
But moſt before approaching ſhow'rs,
Or when a ſtorm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus ſaw ſteal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And ev'ry night at play.

I kept him for his humour' ſake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a ſmile.

But now, beneath this walnut ſhade
He finds his long, laſt home,
And waits, in ſnug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puſs ſhall come.

He, ſtill more aged, feels the ſhocks
From which no care can ſave,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Muſt ſoon partake his grave.

## EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet
Qui totum novennium vixit
Puſs.
Siſte pauliſper
Qui præteriturus es
Et tecum ſic reputa—
Hunc neque canis venaticus
Nec plumbum miſſile
Nec laqueus
Nec imbres nimii
Confecêre
Tamen mortuus eſt—
Et moriar ego.

## Note to line 8, page 109.

In the year 1774, being much indiſpoſed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myſelf either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made ſome diverſion neceſſary, I was glad of any thing that would engage my attention without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything; it was at that time about three months old. Underſtanding better how to teaſe the poor creature than to feed it, and, ſoon becoming weary of their charge, they readily conſented that their father, who ſaw it pining and growing leaner every day, ſhould offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the priſoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of ſuch an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I ſhould find juſt that ſort of employment which my caſe required. It was ſoon known among the neighbours that I was pleaſed with the preſent; and the conſequence was, that in a ſhort time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have ſtocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is neceſſary that I ſhould here diſtinguiſh by the names I gave them—Puſs, Tiney, and Beſs. Notwithſtanding the two feminine appellatives, I muſt inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houſes to ſleep in; each had a ſeparate apartment, ſo contrived that their ordure would paſs through the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatſoever fell, which being duly emptied and waſhed, they were thus kept perfectly ſweet and clean. In the daytime they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puſs grew preſently familiar, would leap into my lap, raiſe himſelf upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my tem-

ples. He would ſuffer me to take him up and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen faſt aſleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nurſed him, kept him apart from his fellows that they might not moleſt him (for, like many other wild animals, they perſecute one of their own ſpecies that is ſick), and by conſtant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, reſtored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a ſentiment which he moſt ſignificantly expreſſed by licking my hand, firſt the back of it, then the palm, then every finger ſeparately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unſaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a ſimilar occaſion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my cuſtom to carry him always after breakfaſt into the garden, where he hid himſelf generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, ſleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves alſo of that vine he found a favourite repaſt. I had not long habituated him to this taſte of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of ſuch expreſſion as it was not poſſible to miſinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately ſucceed, he would take the ſkirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull at it with all his force. Thus Puſs might be ſaid to be perfectly tamed, the ſhyneſs of his nature was done away, and, on the whole, it was viſible, by many ſymptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human ſociety than when ſhut up with his natural companions.

Not ſo Tiney; upon him the kindeſt treatment had not the leaſt effect. He too was ſick, and in his ſickneſs had an equal ſhare of my attention; but if, after his recovery, I took the liberty to ſtroke him, he would grunt, ſtrike with his fore feet, ſpring forward, and bite. He was, however, very entertain-

ing in his way; even his ſurlineſs was matter of mirth, and in his play he preſerved ſuch an air of gravity, and performed his feats with ſuch a ſolemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Beſs, who died ſoon after he was full grown, and whoſe death was occaſioned by his being turned into his box, which had been waſhed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Puſs was tamed by gentle uſage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all; and Beſs had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after ſupper, when the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would friſk, and bound, and play a thouſand gambols, in which Beſs, being remarkably ſtrong and fearleſs, was always ſuperior to the reſt, and proved himſelf the Veſtris of the party. One evening the cat being in the room, had the hardineſs to pat Beſs upon the cheek, an indignity which he reſented by drumming upon her back with ſuch violence, that the cat was happy to eſcape from under his paws and hide herſelf.

I deſcribe theſe animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were ſo expreſſive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is ſaid, that a ſhepherd, however numerous his flock, ſoon becomes ſo familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, diſtinguiſh each from all the reſt; and yet, to a common obſerver, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the ſame diſcrimination in the caſt of countenances would be diſcoverable in hares, and am perſuaded that among a thouſand of them no two could be found exactly ſimilar; a circumſtance little ſuſpected by thoſe who have not had opportunity to obſerve it. Theſe creatures have a ſingular ſagacity in diſcovering the minuteſt alteration that is made in the place to which they are accuſtomed, and inſtantly apply their noſe to the ex-

amination of a new object. A ſmall hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny. They ſeem, too, to be very much directed by the ſmell in the choice of their favourites: to ſome perſons, though they ſaw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even ſcream when they attempted to touch them; but a miller coming in engaged their affections at once; his powdered coat had charms that were irreſiſtible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with theſe ſpecimens of the kind has taught me to hold the ſportſman's amuſement in abhorrence; he little knows what amiable creatures he perſecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their ſpirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that impreſſed as they ſeem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only becauſe man gives them peculiar cauſe for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will juſt give a ſhort ſummary of thoſe articles of diet that ſuit them beſt.

I take it to be a general opinion that they graze, but it is an erroneous one, at leaſt graſs is not their ſtaple; they ſeem rather to uſe it medicinally, ſoon quitting it for leaves of almoſt any kind. Sow-thiſtle, dent-de-lion, and lettuce, are their favourite vegetables, eſpecially the laſt. I diſcovered by accident, that fine white ſand is in great eſtimation with them; I ſuppoſe as a digeſtive. It happened that I was cleaning a bird-cage while the hares were with me; I placed a pot filled with ſuch ſand upon the floor, which being at once directed to by a ſtrong inſtinct, they devoured voraciouſly; ſince that time I have generally taken care to ſee them well ſupplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy, both blade and ſtalk, but the ear they ſeldom eat: ſtraw of any kind, eſpecially wheat-ſtraw, is another of their dainties; they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furniſhed with clean ſtraw

never want them; it ſerves them alſo for a bed, and, if ſhaken up daily, will be kept ſweet and dry for a conſiderable time. They do not indeed require aromatic herbs, but will eat a ſmall quantity of them with great reliſh, and are particularly fond of the plant called muſk; they ſeem to reſemble ſheep in this, that, if their paſture be too ſucculent, they are very ſubject to the rot; to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nouriſhment, and filling a pan with it cut into ſmall ſquares, placed it every evening in their chambers, for they feed only at evening and in the night; during the winter, when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this meſs of bread with ſhreds of carrot, adding to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin; for, though they are fond of the paring, the apple itſelf diſguſts them. Theſe, however, not being a ſufficient ſubſtitute for the juice of ſummer herbs, they muſt at this time be ſupplied with water; but ſo placed that they cannot overſet it into their beds. I muſt not omit that occaſionally they are much pleaſed with twigs of hawthorn, and of the common briar, eating even the very wood when it is of conſiderable thickneſs.

Beſs, I have ſaid, died young; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at laſt, I have reaſon to think, of ſome hurt in his loins by a fall; Puſs is ſtill living, and has juſt completed his tenth year, diſcovering no ſigns of decay, nor even of age, except that he is grown more diſcreet and leſs frolickſome than he was. I cannot conclude without obſerving, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a ſpaniel that had never ſeen a hare to a hare that had never ſeen a ſpaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puſs diſcovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the leaſt ſymptom of hoſtility. There is therefore, it ſhould ſeem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the purſuit of the one occaſions the flight of the other, and the dog purſues